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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

NEW SERIES.

REVISED

VOLUME XLII.

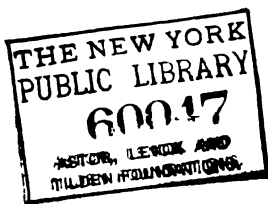
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THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1887,

ALSO

THE EXTRA SPRING NUMBER FOR 1888

WILL BE FOUND AT THE END OF THE VOLUME.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 997. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 1888

PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER I. "DRAMATIS PERSONÆ."

"FRED is bringing Mr. Gower!" exclaimed Mrs. Beresford, raising from the letter she was reading a face in which dismay conflicted with gratification.

"Mr. Gower?" asked the Vicar, glancing up enquiringly.

"Sir George Gower's son," rejoined his wife, with some pride in her tone.

"Oh, I do wish Fred would give up keeping white elephants and asking us to keep them too," replied the Vicar.

"You don't know what advantage such friends may be to him."

"I don't," retorted the Vicar dryly.

"Sir George has four livings, in his gift, one of them eight hundred a year; and if Fred enters the Church——"

"Sir George won't forget that he was his son's boon companion," cried the Vicar, completing the sentence for her in a tone of unusual vexation.

He recalled an unpleasant affair in which his son and young Gower had been mixed up discreditably, and he had other reasons to believe that his son's unsteadiness and extravagance were chiefly due to his intimacy with that gentleman.

He spoke, therefore, fretfully and even petulantly—a most unusual tone with him—for, though he was cynical in speech, with a dry humour which he could never resist, he was very seldom splenetic. In act, there was not in all the world a kindlier man than our Vicar.

The petulance of his tone was so unexpected that it surprised and silenced Fred's two staunch advocates: his mother

and his sister May. It was rather a relief when Kathleen—a little girl of four—after looking up for some seconds at her father, asked:

"Papa, what's a boo companion?"

Her sudden and rapt interest in the conversation was due, not of course to its reference to her brother, but to its supposed reference to a cow.

"Little girls shouldn't ask questions," said her mother hastily, in her fear of the question's provoking another sally against her idolised Fred.

"I know; it's a cow," Kathleen cried triumphantly.

"No; it's a pig, pet," said her father, patting her golden head.

"She'll tell him he's a pig before he's two minutes in the house," whispered May, in serious concern.

"But I didn't say boo' companion, but 'boon,' pet; 'boon companion,'" her father hastened to say, upon this hint.

"And what's a boon, papa?" asked the irrepressible Kathleen.

"That," answered May, hastily handing a piece of bread-and-butter spread with marmalade across her father to the child, in the hope of shunting the subject; "bread-and-butter and marmalade is a boon."

"And refuse flax that's fit for nothing," added her father with a sigh; for "boon," in the North of Ireland, where he was born and bred, has this meaning.

"And what's refusalex, papa?" Kathleen managed to ask with her mouth full; for she had now got it into her head that this was forbidden ground, wherefore she haunted it with the fretful persistence of a wasp hovering about a peach from which it has been driven off again and again.

"Dear, dear!" cried her father in his

affectation of distress, "a child's questions are as many-headed as the hydra: you dispose of one only to find two spring up in its place. Refuse flax, pet, is flax of which you can't make linen; not a surplice, even," he said somewhat bitterly. But he regretted this sarcastic reference to Fred's unfitness for the ministry in the moment of making it; for he was more tender of May's feelings than of those even of her mother; and May also idolised Fred. He turned towards her with a world of tenderness in his eyes. "I am cross and upset, dear; but a white elephant is an upsetting visitor, you'll allow."

"I think, father, Fred felt bound to ask him in return for Mr. Gower's having had him at his place last term," May urged timidly.

"That's only supporting the elephant on the tortoise," he said, smiling at her, and referring to the Hindoo idea of the world's resting on an elephant, which rested in turn on a tortoise. "I wish he hadn't accepted an invitation which he knew he could not adequately return; indeed, to tell you the truth, I wish he had steered clear of Mr. Gower altogether."

He did not give his reasons for objecting to Fred's friendship with Mr. Gower; but he left May under the uncomfortable impression that they were graver than a mere objection to the disparity of their social positions, and to the risk run by the earthen pipkin in swimming down stream with the golden one.

As the Vicar rose from the table he caught a glimpse of the thoughtful trouble in her usually bright face. "My dear," he said, as he stooped to kiss her, "you are too young to take the cares of all the world on your shoulders. You have quite enough on your hands with Mrs. Firth and Mr. Spratt to keep in order."

Here the Vicar was killing two birds with one stone—May herself, and Mr. Spratt, his curate. He classed Mrs. Firth, an incorrigible old drunkard, whom May converted to total abstinence every other week, with the exasperatingly exemplary Mr. Spratt, who had probably an orthodox side for getting out of bed in the morning; and he represented both as under the iron rule and rod of May. There was a good deal of truth, too, in the representation, so far, at least, as Mr. Spratt was concerned, as he worshipped May with a dog-like devotion; he apostatized, for her sweet sake, from what appeared to be the essential principles of the Christian faith, that

is, chairs or benches in the place of pews in the body of the church, and a surpliced choir of boys in the chancel in place of a galaxy of girls, whose ribbons killed the colours in the stained-glass window above them in the west gallery. These girls and pews were very terrible to him; but he gave up worrying his Vicar about them in deference to May's remonstrances.

May, herself, we must admit, had deliciously decided "views" of her own—whatever her father believed was, not true only, but the only truth; whatever her father did was, not merely right, but the one right thing to do. Herein she was much more of a Papist than the Pope, for her father was the last man in the world to lay claim to infallibility.

But to return to the Vicar's breakfast-table. His harnessing Mrs. Firth and Mr. Spratt together under her whip of course made May smile, as it was meant to do.

"Mr. Spratt has broken out again," she said, as though he were Mrs. Firth.

"Re-pewing?" asked the Vicar in real anxiety, for his life had been made a burden to him about these pews.

"No; surplices—not a surpliced choir," she hastened to say in answer to the cloud of worry which was gathering on her father's brow; "but his own surplice—he cannot conscientiously preach in a surplice that buttons."

"What should it do? Hook?" asked her father, with a "what is truth" air of enquiry.

"It should have no fastening and no opening, except for the head to go through."

"So long as a head goes through it, I don't think it matters much—for preaching—how it's made," her father replied dryly.

"I suppose he may have it, then," said May, as though she were interceding with her mother for an indulgence to Kathleen.

"As you please, my dear; but I should say what you say to Mrs. Firth: 'total abstinence—there's nothing like total abstinence for folk who can't control themselves;' give them one glass and there's no stopping them. Look at Ferrand!"

Ferrand was the weak-kneed Vicar of the next parish, who had been led on into what he himself considered all kinds of High Church excesses by an enthusiastic churchwarden, who assured him that each successive change was to be the last.

"I wish, George, you would manage Mr. Spratt yourself," said Mrs. Beresford querulously, moved chiefly by jealousy of

May. She was intensely jealous of her, both with her father and her brother. "It's really ridiculous how he runs to her about everything."

"Now, my dear," urged the Vicar remonstrantly, "I don't interfere between you and Kathleen."

"He doesn't think himself a child at all—or her either," she added significantly; for the Vicar always postponed all suggestions of heart entanglement for May, on the ground that she was only a child; whereas she was eighteen, and old for her years. Besides, she had been secretly and desperately in love since she was ten!

Her father in the early days of his ministry eked out a miserable maintenance, called by antiphrasis "a living," by taking pupils. It was the living he still held—Hammersley in the West Riding—which had, however, been augmented very considerably since then by the falling in of a lease, and the sale of some of the land (which had been so locked up) for building. In these early days, however, Hammersley was worth less than a fourth of its present value; and its Vicar, who was a sound and distinguished scholar, was glad to prepare pupils for the University. Among these was a youth named Hugh Grey, a harum-scarum youth, who at school was always either just in or just out of a scrape, and who, at Hammersley, was at home everywhere, and with everything and everyone, except in the Vicarage study, and with books. He just worshipped the Vicar (though in this he was hardly singular, for George Beresford's pupils all loved and honoured him); but even the Vicar's utmost efforts and influence with him failed to make Hugh take kindly to study. The study door once closed behind him, however, his dulness seemed to drop from him like a cloak. He was bright not only in disposition but in intelligence—outside the world of books, the most genial, lively, alert, and adroit lad that ever gladdened a house.

Now in these days Fred was at school; Kathleen was unborn; the other pupil, Harcourt, was a superior young person; and only Hugh therefore remained for May. She used to wait and watch for him near the study door like a dog; and like a dog she was taken out by him, on his release, into the woods to be initiated into all kinds of sporting mysteries. Hugh was one of those born sportsmen, who seem to get into the habits and ways and even into the confidence of wild creatures

almost by instinct. He never seemed to bait a trap or a hook in vain, and what he chose to catch and keep he could tame with incredible quickness and completeness. Of all his pets (and he had a perfect Zoo of them in an out-house) and of the master of them all, May was made mistress. She could make him do anything she chose; but, as she chose generally what he liked, and because he liked it, her yoke was light as a chaplet. She had a natural taste and aptitude for running wild in woods, and came soon to be able to cross fords and fences, climb trees, and thread thickets like a boy, but never, somehow, like a tom-boy. She did all with a girl's grace, without the least roughness, or loudness of speech, or of manner; in part through ineradicable natural refinement, and in part through her companion never forgetting for a moment that she was a girl. If Hugh had been a boy only a few years her senior, he might have treated her as a boy, and made something of a boy of her; but being seven years her senior, and the most chivalrous of youths besides, he showed her that sheltering tenderness and deference under which feminine graces grow, as the violet under the shadow of an oak. Her being but a child only made him more tenderly protective of her, and he might have spoiled her by his "observances," but for her mother, who mortified her wholesomely as occasion offered. That her mother with her notions of propriety—strict to austerity—should have allowed her to run wild in this way, would have been unaccountable to any one unaware of Mrs. Beresford's belief in the immaculate chivalry of the well-born. If Hugh Grey had not been excellently connected, May's mother would have considered her running wild with him very bad form indeed; but, as he happened to be of high family, she was perfectly satisfied of its propriety.

"He is one of the Hogshire Greys," she would say in a tone that awed to silence the listener through the fear that speech would betray a vulgar ignorance of the very existence, not to say of the greatness, of the Hogshire Greys. May, who was passionately fond of such story-books as were steeped in poetry—Hans Andersen's or Hawthorne's Tales, for instance—and who loved also such poems as she could understand, fancied that the "Elegy" must have been written by one of these august Hogshire Greys, because of her mother's continual reference to them as though they were the only Greys in existence.

Hugh, however, upon being appealed to, doubted this on the general ground that the glory of the Hogshire Greys seemed to consist in never having done anything of any kind within the memory of man. "They had always been dunces and duffers, as far as he knew," he said, and added with a laugh, that "he was not likely to disgrace them."

May's discovery that the poet's name was spelt differently hardly set the matter at rest, since "in those days," Hugh said—as though speaking of the days of Cædmon—"no one knew how to spell, and certainly not his people."

It will be seen that Hugh was not a literary person; but he was so far, therefore, from despising learning that he had for it the proverbial respect given to the unknown; and May's precocious knowledge he regarded as especially prodigious. This the young lady was not long in discovering and turning to her account. She would read up bits of natural history for the mere purpose of springing them upon Hugh to his amazement, when on their expeditions.

It was to her, for instance, that he was indebted for the receipt for putting to flight the most savage dog in the moment of its fellest fury:

"Let but the fugitive," she read out for him from a book called "Bailly's Pets and Pests of the Farmyard," "let but the fugitive halt in mid flight, bend double suddenly, and look back steadily between his outstretched legs with fixed look of defiance at the furious brute, and it will be arrested in a moment, as though turned to stone; its ears will droop, its tail be tucked between its legs and, uttering a prolonged and melancholy howl of amazement and dismay, it will turn to flee in fear faster than it had pursued in fury. This has never been known to fail."

This mode of speaking of it as a time-honoured experiment was calculated to encourage a much less enterprising person than Hugh, who, it should be remembered, was but seventeen, and young for his years. Nothing could prevent him testing the thing forthwith. There was a churlish farmer in the neighbourhood, named Mawson, who had effectively protested against the claim of a right of way through one of his fields by keeping a bull in it for a good part of the year, and, in the bull's absence, by letting loose a bull-dog upon trespassers. Upon this dog, Hugh must needs try the great experiment, in spite

of May's tearful remonstrances. The girl regretted greatly the silly vanity of her parade of learning when it had such a consequence; but nothing she could say would divert Hugh from the enterprise. The lad had all the confidence of ignorance in anything printed, and no little confidence in himself besides, with a better warrant.

Certainly it was not the fault of his nerve or pluck that the enterprise miscarried somehow, as it did. Whether he found a difficulty in fixing a look of defiance on his face when upside down, or in levelling the look upwards and backwards from between his knees, we cannot say; but the bull-dog, instead of turning, first, to stone, and then, to flight with a melancholy howl of amazement and dismay, took the unfair advantage of so inviting and defenceless an attitude, to bury its teeth in the calf of Hugh's leg.

The incident is worth record only in illustration of May's heroic devotion to her hero. Perched securely on the top of a wall, she had been watching the experiment in heartsick anxiety and terror; but, no sooner was Hugh attacked by the dog, than she forgot all fear in an excess of fear, so to say. She dropped from the wall, rushed, shrieking wildly, to the dog, and seizing the brute with both hands round the neck, tried to tear it from its grim grip. Fortunately the farmer, coming up almost at the same moment, saved her from being torn savagely herself.

Even the surly farmer was moved by her heroism, and by the hysterical way in which she clung sobbing to Hugh while his wound was being bound up—both arms about his neck, and her face hidden against his cheek from the sight of his blood.

"Th'art a leal little lass; th'art for sewer!" he said; and Hugh no more forgot the words than he forgot the devotion that evoked them. "Th'art a leal little lass; th'art for sewer!" recurred to him thousands of times during all the rough years since his parting from May.

For Hugh never even attempted to enter Oxford. He stayed a year with the Vicar, and would delightedly have stayed longer, if his tutor had allowed him; but Mr. Beresford, greatly to his own regret and to May's desolation, felt bound conscientiously to give him up in despair.

"It's no use, my boy," he said, putting his hand affectionately on Hugh's shoulder, "you'll never make anything of Greek or Latin."

"I'm afraid not, sir," Hugh answered in his manly and modest way.

"You should have lived in those days," said the Vicar, pointing to the "Homer" they had just closed. "You'd have beaten the best of them."

And, indeed, Hugh found his place where only Homeric virtues stood a man in good stead. He went to America, and spent years of wandering in its roughest regions, taking to strange trades and still stranger companions, yet escaping uncontaminated. His remembrance of the "leal little lass," and of her father also, had much to do with protecting his mind against corruption.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

JANUARY.

THOMAS TUSSEY, the poet of Queen Mary's time—who has left us in his verses a clear insight into the customs which prevailed in the past—recommends the farmer, in his "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry," to prune his trees of their superfluous boughs in the month of January, that the cattle may browse upon them. For sheep, he advised the farmer to use myrtle and ivy as food. The difficulties of keeping beasts through the winter are thus expressed :

From Christmas till May be well entered in
Some cattle wax faint, and look poorly and thin ;
And chiefly when prime grass at first doth appear,
Then most is the danger of all the old year.
Take verjuice and heat it, a pint for a cow,
Bay salt a handful, to rub tongue—ye wot how :
That done with the salt, let her drink off the rest,
This many times raiseth the feeble up beast.

The first day of note after New Year's Day is Epiphany, or Twelfth Day, January the sixth. In the Eastern Church, Christmas and Epiphany are deemed but one and the same feast, though our young people only know the latter as Twelfth Day.

The cake, which in most places formed an important part of the entertainment on this day, was known, as it is still known, by the name of Twelfth Cake. This cake was covered with figures representing a King and Queen and a number of grotesque characters made of sugar and eggs. This was cut up on the Vigil of Twelfth Day. A bag, containing a number of tickets with figures on them corresponding to those on the cake, was passed round, and each drew one and received as a prize the piece of cake which had a similar character on it. A great deal of mirth was occasioned by the distribution of the prizes.

The old calendars state that on this day's vigil "Kings were created or elected by beans—otherwise, by drawing the chief prize on the cake—and thus the day was denominated 'the Festival of Kings'"—a term still retained in Spain.

Herrick, the quaint historian poet, describes the festivities of Twelfth Night in the following lines :

Now, now, the mirth comes,
With the cake full of plums,
Where Bean's the King of the sports here ;
Besides we must know
The Pea also
Must revel as Queen in the Court here.

Begin then to choose
This night as ye use,
Who shall, for the present delight here,
Be a King by the lot,
And who shall not
Be a Twelfth Day Queen for the night here.

Which known, let us make
Joy sops with the cake ;
And let not a man then be seen here
Who, unurged, will not drink
To the base from the brink
A health to the King and the Queen here.

Next crown the bowl full
Of gentle lamb's wool,
And sugar, and nutmeg, and ginger ;
With store of ale too,
And thus ye must do
To make the wassail a swinger.

Give, then, to the King
And Queen wassailing ;
And though with ale ye be wet here,
Yet part ye from hence
As free from offence
As when ye, innocent, met here.

Robert Baddeley, the comedian, who had been cook to Foote, left by will sufficient money to provide cake and wine for the performers at Drury Lane Theatre on Twelfth Night, a custom still continued, but with more magnificence than the founder ever anticipated.

In Gloucestershire, according to Rudge, all the servants of every farmer assemble on Twelfth Day Eve in one of the fields that has been sown with wheat. At the end of twelve lands they make twelve fires in a row with straw, around one of which, made larger than the rest, they drink a cheerful glass of cider to their master's health, and success to the future harvest ; then returning home they feast on cakes, made with carraways, soaked in cider, which they claim as a reward for past labour in sowing the grain.

The "Gentleman's Magazine," February, 1791, records a similar custom in Herefordshire : "At the approach of the evening the farmers, with their friends and servants, meet together, and about six o'clock walk out to the field where wheat

is growing. In the highest part of the ground twelve small fires and one large one are lighted up. The attendants, headed by the master of the family, pledge the company in old cider, which circulates freely on these occasions. A circle is formed round the large fire, when a general shouting and hallooing takes place, which may be heard answered from all the adjacent villages and fields. Sometimes fifty or sixty of these fires may be seen all at once. This being finished, the company all return home, where the good housewife and her maids are preparing a good supper. A large cake is always provided, with a hole in the middle. After supper the company all attend the bailiff (or head of the oxen) to the wain-house, where the following ceremony is observed. The master at the head of his friends fills the cup (generally of strong ale) and stands opposite the first or finest of the oxen; he then pledges him in a curious toast, the company follow his example with all the other oxen, and address each by his name. This being finished, the large cake is produced, and with much ceremony is put on the horn of the first ox, through the hole before mentioned. The ox is then tickled to make him toss his head. If he throw the cake behind them it is the mistress's perquisite; if before, in which is termed the "brosy," the bailiff himself claims the prize. The company then return to the house, the doors of which they find locked; nor will they be opened until some joyous song be sung. On their gaining admittance a scene of mirth and jollity ensues, which lasts the greater part of the night."

In the South Devonshire hams (hamlets), on the Eve of Epiphany, according to the "Gentleman's Magazine," February, 1791, the farmer and his workmen, with a large pitcher of cider, go to the orchard, and there encircling one of the best bearing trees, drink the following toast several times—

Here's to thee,
Old apple tree,
Whence thou may'st lud, and whence thou may'st
blow,
And whence thou may'st bear apples enow!
Hats full!
Caps full!
Bushel, bushel!
Sacks full!
And my pockets full, too!
Huzzah!

This done they return to the house, the doors of which they are sure to find bolted by the females, who, be the weather

what it may, are inexorable to all entreaties to open them till some one has guessed at what is on the spit, which is generally some nice little thing difficult to be hit on, and is the reward of him who first names it. The doors are then thrown open, and the lucky clodpole receives the tit-bit as his recompense.

The "Natural History of Staffordshire," (1680), page 434, tells of a curious Twelfth Day custom at Paget's Bromley, in Staffordshire, which has now ceased to exist. A man came along the village with a mock horse fastened to him and with which he danced, the while making a snapping noise with a bow and arrow. He was attended by half-a-dozen or so fellow-villagers, wearing mock deer heads, and displaying the arms of the several chief landlords of the town. This party danced the "hays" and other country dances to music, "amidst the sympathy and applause of the multitude." There was also a huge pot of ale, with cakes by general contribution of the village, out of the very surplus of which they not only repaired their church, but kept their poor, too; which charges, says Dr. Plott, "are not now perhaps so cheerfully borne."

According to "Strickland's Lives of the Queens of Scotland," vol. iv., page 20, it appears that on Twelfth Day, 1563, Mary Queen of Scots celebrated the French pastime of the King of the Bean at Holyrood, but with a Queen instead of a King as being more appropriate, she being a female sovereign. The lot fell to Mary Fleming, Her Majesty's attendant, and the mistress good-naturedly arrayed the girl in her own robes and jewels that she might duly sustain the mimic dignity in the festivities of the night. The English resident, Randolph, who was in love with one, Mary Beton, another of the Queen's maids of honour, wrote in excited terms about this festival to the Earl of Leicester. "Happy," said he, "was it unto this realm that her reign endured no longer. Two such sights in one state, in so good accord, I believe was never seen, as to behold two worthy Queens possess, without envy, one kingdom, both upon a day. I leave the rest to your lordship to judge of."

Amongst the Royal observances held on this day was that the King and Queen, preceded by heralds, pursuivants, and the Knights of the Garter, Thistle, and Bath, in the collars of their respective orders, proceeded to the Chapel Royal, St. James's, where gold, frankincense, and

myrrh, were offered in imitation of the offerings of the Eastern Magi to the infant Saviour. The custom has ceased; but two gentlemen from the Lord Chamberlain's office still carry the gold and spices in a box, ornamented at the top with a star, the which they deposit on an alms'-dish.

With the Druids, Twelfth Day was the first day of the year.

It is only in remote country districts and large mansions that any observance is now made of Twelfth Day, though Twelfth Cakes are still common.

On "Rock," or "Saint Distaff's Day," January the seventh, Christmas festivities with our maternal ancestors were supposed to have quite terminated, and spinning was to recommence on the part of the females of the family. That work was resumed in but a half-hearted fashion, however, seems evident from the following lines by Herrick :

Partly work and partly play,
You must on Saint Distaff's Day;
From the plough soon free your team,
Then come home and fother them.
If the maids a spinning go,
Burn the flax and fire the tow
Bring in pails of water then,
Let the maids bewash the men;
Give Saint Distaff all the right,
Then bid Christmas sport good night.
And next morrow everyone
To his own vocation.

The custom above referred to was, that the men set the flax a burning, in return for which the maids soused the men with water. The quaint poet-historian now goes on to touch upon a bit of superstition :

Down with the rosemary and so,
Down with the bays and mistletoe.
Down with the holly, ivy all,
Wherewith ye dressed the Christmas hall;
And so the superstitious find
No one least branch there left behind.
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected there, maids, trust to me,
So many goblins you shall see.

A wild saturnalia usually brought the long-drawn-out festivity to a close on this night; and one cannot but think it would be a welcome close, too, after all its romping and rioting.

As Saint Distaff's Day concluded the Christmas festivities for our female ancestors, so did Plough Monday mark the end of the festival for our male ancestors. This is the first Monday after Twelfth Day, and was the day fixed upon for husbandmen to return to the duties of agriculture. A plough, gaily decked with ribbons, was drawn along the country roads, sometimes by oxen, but more commonly by sturdy rustics, dressed up with

shirts over their jackets, and hats and shoulders aflame with ribbon streamers, before whom went one more gaudily attired in women's clothes, who was saluted by his comrades as "Bessy." The duty of this individual was to rattle a money-box and solicit contributions from those whose houses the procession passed. Very few refused the demand, but some did, and these fared but badly.

In such cases Bessy rattled his box, the ploughmen came up and started dancing, country lads blew bullocks' horns or shouted with all their might. If this failed to make any effect on the obdurate ones, orders were given by one of the company who acted as leader; the ploughshare was driven in the ground in front of the house, and the whole of the men were yoked to the plough, and in a short time the ground was as ridgy as a new-ploughed field.

Time has nearly worn out the Plough Monday celebration all over the country, with its rustic dances. In all probability it is to this that the Morris dancers of the North owe their existence, as they sometimes drag a plough from door to door soliciting "Plough money" to defray the expenses of a party and a dance in the evening.

When a schoolboy, I remember seeing a band of farm men and lads, decked out in all manner of grotesque devices, parading the streets of Leicester as "plough-boys," and capering about, but with no plough accompanying them. Tassier's "Husbandry" tells us that

Plough Munday, next after the Twelfth-tide is past,
Bids out with the plough: the worst husband is last.

Before leaving Plough Monday I must refer to a custom observed on the morning of this day amongst rural men and maids. These always strove the one to be up and dressed before the other. If the men were up and dressed by the side of the fire-place with some of their implements of husbandry before the maids could put the kettle on, the latter were under fine to provide a fowl for the men next Shrovetide; or, as an alternative, if any of the ploughmen, returning at night came to the kitchen hatch and cried "look in the pot," before the maids could cry "look on the dunghill," they incurred the same penalty.

Saint Fillan, whose day is observed on the ninth of January, was one of the most famous of Scottish miracle-working saints. For many years Saint Fillan was "Abbott of the Monastery" at Pittenween, during

the seventh century. In the new statistical accounts of Scotland, it is recorded that "at Strathfillan there is a deep pool, called the Holy Pool, where, in olden times, they were wont to dip insane people. The ceremony was performed after sunset, on the first day of the quarter, Old Style, and before sunrise next morning. The dipped persons were instructed to take three stones from the bottom of the pool, and, walking three times round each of three cairns on the banks, throw a stone into each. They were next conveyed to the ruins of Saint Fillan's Chapel, and in a corner, called Saint Fillan's bed, they were laid on their back and left tied all night. If next morning they were found loose, the cure was deemed perfect, and thanks returned to the Saint." The record goes on further to say, and it shows of how little note a saint is in his own country: "The pool is still visited, not by parishioners, for they have no faith in its virtues, but by people from other and distant places."

The next saint's day is four days removed from this—Saint Hilarius, January the thirteenth. Beyond the fact that this saint gives the name to one of the English Law Terms—the first in the year—he possesses little note. The Law Term is called "Hilary," and the saint is sometimes wrongly called "Saint Hilary." Hilarius lived in the fourth century, and was born of distinguished parents at Poitiers, in Gaul. Born a Pagan he was converted to Christianity, and in the year 354 was chosen Bishop of his native place.

In the year 356, he successfully defended the doctrine of Athanasius, condemned by the Council of Arles three years previously. He wrote a number of works, his principal one, written in Phrygia, whither he had been banished after being deposed from his bishopric by Constantinus, being in twelve books, on "The Trinity." On the death of the Emperor in 361, he was restored, and died in 368. Subsequently he was canonised. The Hilary Law Term begins on January the eleventh, and lasts until the end of January; during that time the Law Courts are said to be held in "Banco."

Saint Hilary's Day has a bad reputation as being the coldest day in the year, colder even than the fourteenth, which is sometimes described as an exceeding cold day. This belief is at least as old as the year 1205.

In commemoration of the flight into

Egypt, the fourteenth of January was observed in olden times, in a carnival sort of manner, by the leading of an ass, on which was seated a girl holding a child to her breast, through the principal streets. The ass and its burden were then taken into the principal church and placed near the high altar, while a suitable service was performed. In place of the usual responses the congregation imitated the braying of an ass, and at the end of the service, instead of the usual benediction, the priest brayed three times. On this day, which was also known as Mallard Day, it was customary to sing this song at All Souls' College, Oxford.

Griffin, bustard, turkey, capon,
Let other hungry mortals gape on;
And on the bones their stomachs fall hard,
But let All Souls' men have their mallard.
Oh! by the blood of King Edward!
Oh! by the blood of King Edward!
It was a swapping, swapping mallard!
Because he saved, if some don't fool us,
The place that's called the Head of Tulus.

The poets feign Jove turned a swan,
But let them prove it if they can;
As for our proof 'tis not at all hard,
For it was a swapping, swapping mallard!

Chorus.

Therefore let us sing and dance a gallard,
To the remembrance of a mallard,
And as the mallard dives in a pool,
Let us dabble, dive, and duck in bowl:
Oh! by the blood of King Edward!
Oh! by the blood of King Edward!
It was a swapping, swapping mallard!

It is said that the institution of this festival took place in the year 1437, consequent upon the finding of an overgrown mallard in a drain when the foundation for the college building was being dug.

The festival of Saint Peter's Chair, celebrated on the eighteenth of January, is one of the grand days of the Church of Rome, and takes place under circumstances of the greatest solemnity and splendour. It is of very ancient date, and celebrates the founding of the Church of Rome. Lady Morgan in her "Italy" give a vivid description of the magnificent scene in Saint Peter's on this day.

Saint Agnes is next, on January twenty-first; she was martyred in the tenth persecution, and her day is considered propitious for the working of love-charms.

We now come to January the twenty-second, Saint Vincent's Day. This saint was martyred some time in the fourth century by order of the Pro-consul Dacian, under tortures of the most barbarous character. He was first broiled over a fire, and then put into a dungeon, bound in

stocks, and left to starve. In this sad condition he was visited and comforted by angels. The bones of the saint are still preserved with the utmost veneration, in one of the churches of Franca. Old weather-wise people used to say :

Remember, on Saint Vincent's Day,
If that the sun his beams display,
Be sure to mark the transient beam—
Which through the casement sheds a gleam :
For 'tis a token bright and clear
Of prosperous weather all the year.

Let us hope the twenty-second may always prove bright and clear, if the prosperity only follows.

The last saint's day in this month, Saint Paul's, kept on the twenty-fifth, is a festival alike of the English and Roman Catholic Churches.

Saint Paul seems to be more the patron saint of weather than of anything else, at any rate to our forefathers, for with them fair weather on Saint Paul's Day used to forebode a prosperous and fortunate year. Snow and rain on this day betokened a dear year and unfruitful; clouds, great mortality among cattle; winds, the forerunner of war. Their beliefs in verse were thus rendered :

If Saint Paul's Day be fair and clear,
It does betide a happy year;
But if it chance to snow or rain,
Then will be dear all kinds of grain;
If clouds or mists do dark the skie,
Great store of birds and beasts shall die;
And if the windes do flie aloft,
Then war shalle vex the kingdom oft.

In "The Beauties of England and Wales," it is recorded that "on this day the buck and the doe were brought by one or more servants at the hour of the procession, and through the midst thereof, and offered at the high altar of Saint Paul's Cathedral; after which the persons that brought the buck received of the Dean and Chapter, by the hands of their Chamberlain, twelve pence sterling for their entertainment; but nothing when they brought the doe. The buck being brought to the steps of the altar, the Dean and Chapter, appareled in copes and proper vestments, with garlands of roses on their heads, sent the body of the buck to be baked, and had the head and horns fixed on a pole before the Cross in their procession round about the church, till they issued at the west door, where the keeper that brought it blowed the death of the buck, and then the horns that were about the city answered him in like manner; for which they had each of the Dean and Chapter, three and fourpence in money and their dinner; and the keeper, during his

stay, meat, drink, and lodging, and five shillings at his going away, together with a loaf of bread, having in it the picture of Saint Paul." This custom arose from an obligation incurred by Sir William Brand, in 1375, when he was permitted to enclose twenty acres of the Dean's land, in consideration of presenting the Clergy of the Cathedral with a fat buck and doe yearly, on the day of the Conversion and Commemoration of Saint Paul.

It is stated in the "Chronicles of the Grey Friars of London," that "on St. Paul's Day there was a general procession, with the children of all the schools in London, with all the Clerks, Curates, and Parsons, and Vicars, in copes, with their crosses, also the choir of St. Paul's, and divers Bishops in their habits, and the Bishop of London, with his pontificals and cope, bearing the Sacrament under a canopy, and four prebends bearing it in their grey 'amos.' And so up into Leadenhall, with the Mayor and Aldermen in scarlet, with their cloaks, and all the crafts in their best array, and so came down again on the other side, and so to St. Paul's again. And then the King, with My Lord Cardinal, came to St. Paul's and heard Masse, and went home again. And at night great bonfires were made through London, for joy at the people that were converted, likewise as St. Paul was converted."

If the twenty-fifth January proved bad in Germany from a weather point of view, the common people used to drag the images of Saint Paul and Saint Urban to the river, and give them a good ducking as a sort of derisive punishment.

NOT PROFESSIONAL.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

DR. WALTER'S afternoon rounds had seemed to him long and wearisome, and he was more than usually glad to get out of his carriage at the door of his own house in Kensington. It was a cold rainy evening, and the dripping umbrellas of the few people obliged to be out, with the pavement shining under the gas-light with rain, gave a depressing aspect to the street. Dr. Walter's face showed that he found it depressing, as he went up the steps and let himself in. The light in his hall was turned low; the fire had been allowed to get low too; and it felt chilly even after the bitter outside air. He hung up his

coat impatiently, and, sharply opening a door on his left, went through his consulting-room into a small room opening from it, where he spent most of his leisure moments. The other rooms of his house were, as he often said, too large for one man.

The little room he entered was furnished with that attention to comfort first and appearance afterwards, which is much oftener a characteristic of men than women. There were as many easy chairs of various forms as the size of the room would allow; two long bookcases, in which was a great deal of light literature, and the writing-table, which stood on one side of the fire, contained every appliance of comfort and luxury. The fire here was brighter; ringing for lights, Dr. Walter drew a chair close to it, and sat down. He was tired, and gave himself up for a few moments to the pleasure of doing nothing mentally or physically.

He stretched out his hand for the new novel lying on the shelf of the bookcase nearest to him, with which he meant to spend the half-hour before dinner, only to lay it down again instantly, however, as there came into his mind the remembrance of a letter which had been brought to him just as he went out—too late for him to be able to answer it then. Knowing that it must be answered that evening, he rose, and, going to his table for it, read it again, with a frown on his face.

It was from a Mr. Meredith, speaking of his daughter's serious illness, the result of a carriage accident, and asking if Dr. Walter would be willing to hold a consultation with—and it was this that deepened the frown as he read it—"Dr. Mary Chaston, who has attended my daughter for the last two years." A few polite words as to the way in which Dr. Walter's name had been mentioned to him, and a request that, if it were possible, sometime in the afternoon of the next day might be fixed for the consultation brought Mr. Meredith's letter to an end.

On his first hasty reading of it in the afternoon, Dr. Walter's only thought had been of refusal. He, in common with many other members of his profession, entirely objected to women doctors. His had been one of the strongest voices when several professional friends, with whom he sometimes spent an evening, had thoroughly talked over the question, and had decided that, to their minds, her entrance into the

profession was placing woman in an unnatural position, and would, inevitably, harden the woman who became a doctor to an extent which must take all womanliness from her.

The question of her competency had never been discussed, though probably only because there was perfect unanimity of feeling among them on that part of the subject. Still, though the remembrance of his words was very strongly before his mind, he did not at once begin his note. He sat in front of his table thinking: first, that he had no very definite reason for refusing; of course he could plainly have stated his feelings about women doctors, but, though he hardly had confessed it yet, they were beginning to yield to a strong curiosity to see for himself a woman who, it seemed to him, must have lost her most attractive characteristics; also, he was not without anxiety, though he would not have said it in so many words, to see what a woman was able to do in the profession to which he had given so much of his life. He was too practical, besides, to lose a chance of doing anything which was "good for the practice" if possible.

This Mr. Meredith, though unknown personally to Dr. Walter, was, he well knew, the centre of a large circle of people to whom he would like to be known. But there came to him, as he had nearly decided, the natural dislike and feeling of something like humiliation at meeting a woman on the equal footing a consultation would imply; and the other considerations nearly faded from his mind before it. They reasserted themselves, however, with great strength in the last of two or three turns he took up and down the room in front of the fire—his favourite way of thinking out a difficulty—and he finally wrote a short note of acquiescence, making an appointment for three o'clock the next day.

"After all," he said aloud, as he threw himself again into his easy-chair, "it will be an experience—I need never repeat it if it is a disagreeable one—and I can stand half-an-hour, for once, of short hair, angularity, and spectacles, I think."

The next morning as he drove about the thought of three o'clock occurred, at intervals, to his mind with a sort of unexpressed wish that the consultation were over; he disliked the thought more than he had done on the night before; and once or twice thought that, had it been possible, he would even now have refused. But he

came back to his former decision, and it was with rather a sarcastic smile at his vacillation of the morning that he left his own house to keep the appointment. The house at which he arrived had about it the odd hush which illness always gives, familiar enough generally to Dr. Walter; but to-day it seemed to him almost oppressive, and the entrance of Mr. Meredith was a welcome break.

After a few words of greeting, and some mention of his daughter, Mr. Meredith, saying, "You will allow me to introduce you at once to Dr. Mary Chaston," rose. Dr. Walter mechanically rose and followed him through folding doors into a large drawing-room, where a lady stood by the window. Dr. Walter's eyes fell on her at once as he entered the room, and by the time Mr. Meredith was introducing him, he had had time to regain some of the self-possession which the first sight of her had taken away. The slight, tall figure, dressed very well but severely, in grey, was so different from anything he could have imagined, that he felt almost prepared for the face he looked at when Dr. Mary Chaston turned towards him—a face not pretty, not with any especially good feature about it, but with a broad forehead over deep-set, keen blue eyes which would have looked hard, but for the wonderfully sympathetic expression the whole face wore. It was plainly that of a woman to whom life had been earnest, to whom it had brought patience, and tenderness; yet it looked to Dr. Walter young still—certainly not more than thirty-three or four. The hand which rested on the back of a chair as she spoke, was long and very firm, and expressed nearly as much character as her face.

As Mr. Meredith left the room, she turned to Dr. Walter, and the look of her keen blue eyes gave him a curious sensation of being seen mentally as well as physically, while she gave him clearly and concisely all the technical details of the case.

He listened, throwing himself thoroughly into what she was saying, growing more interested every moment, and losing, under the influence of her simple, direct manner, the bewildered surprise which had been his at first. So completely was this the case that he felt himself in a perfectly natural position, and one to which he had long been accustomed, when, a few minutes later, he followed her into the room where all the interest of the house was centred

—where the girl lay, whose life Dr. Walter saw at his first glance was nearly over.

The room was full of deep red light from one of the intensely brilliant sunsets which were frequent through that winter. It shone with a curious glow on the white face of the girl, and once Dr. Walter saw it catch and seem to light up the great tenderness now in the blue eyes which could evidently, at times, become the hardest feature of Mary Chaston's face. The light had not faded, only grown deeper, when they came back into the long drawing-room, and it fell on them as they stood together in the window, while Dr. Walter said that he could only confirm the worst view of the case, and tell the father to whom his daughter was plainly the brightest thing in life that very few were left of the days for which she could be with him.

Quietly and very gently Mary Chaston walked towards Mr. Meredith when he came into the room to hear the decision which meant so much for him. There was, to Dr. Walter, something about her intensely womanly as she stood there saying the words which brought such sorrow with them. He acquiesced in them with a voice and manner which had lost much of his usual calm, professional stoicism; nor had he entirely regained it when he put Dr. Mary Chaston into her carriage at the door five minutes after, and, raising his hat, walked quickly in the direction of his next patient.

A clock striking four as he passed almost made him start: it seemed more as if a day had passed than only an hour since he stood at Mr. Meredith's door.

All the rest of the afternoon he was too busy to think, for more than a moment at a time, of what alteration—if any—this first experience of them had made in the views of women doctors.

He was very tired when he got home; perhaps that was partly the reason that, though he tried to think the question over calmly and carefully in the light of his afternoon's experience, he could give no fresh argument for or against women as doctors. He was not converted, by any means; but he was persuaded by the woman he had seen, that it was possible for women to undertake the work without necessarily putting themselves into a false position; and his last decided thought before he grew too sleepy over his cigar to think coherently, was that he would not afford his friends the amusement he had intended

beforehand for them from his account of the first consultation with a woman, but would keep the afternoon's experience to himself.

It was brought before his mind a day or two later very vividly; for, as he read the "Times" over his breakfast, his eyes glancing over that first column which men read none the less because of their sarcasm over women's liking for it, his eyes fell on the short notice which told of the death of "Florence Meredith, only daughter of J. Meredith, Esq."—he laid the paper down beside him and his thoughts went back to Dr. Mary Chaston.

He wondered if she felt the girl's death in proportion to the grieved look which he had seen on her face when his own words told her he thought it a hopeless case. It struck him for the first time how little he himself had cared at any of the times when he had watched death end his work, apart from a feeling of vexation that the skill on which he prided himself had proved useless. The feeling gradually grew upon him all that day, and during many days to come, that it was with men and women he had to deal, not "cases" only—men and women whose death or life meant everything in many cases to those whom they left behind or stayed with. It altered him greatly; and a tenderness which had never before been his, and which could never be his perfectly until he fully realised what wonderful work his daily fight with death was, began to come to him, often unconsciously strengthened by the sudden remembrance of Mary Chaston's face when she bent over the dying girl in the sunset.

A serious epidemic broke out in the end of the winter—the weather was unusually damp and hot—and it gave Dr. Walter severe, almost incessant, work and thought, before it could be at all subdued.

One evening, as he walked from a patient's house to the street where he had arranged that his carriage should meet him, he was thinking very earnestly over some sanitary measures which had occurred to him as likely to prevent a fresh outbreak. He was so much engrossed in these thoughts that he did not notice, until he was close to it, the small crowd on the outskirts of which he was passing. He gave a hurried glance at it, and, seeing that the centre of it was a carriage more or less "smashed," he waited a moment that he might find out if anyone was hurt.

At that instant the crowd moved that a lady might come through it on to the pave-

ment, and, looking in the same direction as everyone else, Dr. Walter saw, walking slowly, with a face which, though not alarmed, was very white, Mary Chaston. He made his way through the people to her instantly, and said:

"What can I do for you? How can I help you?"

"Thank you," she answered, evidently knowing him again at once, "the man will do all that is possible; and I—I will, I think, walk straight home."

But the rather uncertain sound of her voice made Dr. Walter, without ceremony, put her hand on his arm, saying:

"No—you will let me drive you—my carriage is near."

"Thank you," she said once more.

When they reached his carriage, he put her in carefully, asked her address, and, after a look at the white face which leant back against the dark cushions of his hansom, said: "You will let me see you safely home," and got in beside her. They drove in silence, which she only once broke to tell him how the accident had happened and to excuse herself for what she called her "very unprofessional weakness."

He answered lightly, and then silently watched the familiar streets as they passed with a curious feeling of keen pleasure in the help he had been at hand to give, which made him try to place the rugs still more carefully round the slight figure beside him.

They reached the address she had given—one of those dark, gloomy-looking houses which seem, by force of contrast, to speak of a bright interior, and having seen her safely into her own house he left her, asking first if he might call to assure himself that she was not hurt.

On the next afternoon he came to the end of his work, and gave his coachman Dr. Mary Chaston's address, with mixed feelings—of hesitation to which nothing would have induced him to give its real name of shyness; and of pleasure at the thought of seeing again the face which had been much in his thoughts since the evening before. He was shown upstairs on reaching the gloomy-looking house into a room of which the only characteristics he could distinctly remember afterwards, were a strong scent of violets, and a long, low, chintz-covered couch near the fire, in the corner of which Mary Chaston was sitting reading. She rose to meet him, and as she came nearer he saw that some of the violets—white ones—were in her dress. They sat down,

and she thanked him for his help with a sort of gracious earnestness which made him feel it impossible to find strong enough words to disclaim the idea of having done anything worthy of it.

The spring evenings were not very long yet; in the rather dark room the firelight became quickly brighter than the daylight; and this perhaps helped to make Dr. Walter feel it utterly impossible to do or say anything conventional. The feeling grew stronger every moment; he could, it seemed to him, take up none of the ordinary subjects with which he was accustomed to "make conversation" to the women he met on the rare occasions when he dined out. His answers to her were very little more than monosyllabic, and yet he did not want to go; this woman made him long to talk to her, and at last, in desperation, he did what he had determined nothing should induce him to do with her—he began to talk of the case over which they first met. He touched on it only at first; but she took it up at once, and in a minute or two she had roused herself from her half-leaning position with a quick energetic movement, and every line of her still white face was distinct in the firelight.

Very earnestly she answered his half-hesitating sentences, and to Dr. Walter's own intense surprise, when he came to think of it afterwards, they had in a moment begun a discussion on a disputed scientific point which was just then exciting the medical world. Dr. Walter forgot utterly that he was talking to a woman only. It was as much as he could do to maintain the ground on which, when he had cursorily thought over the point on seeing it alluded to in a medical paper, he had thought himself so firmly established. He found he had met a woman who knew far more about this particular point, far more about things not technical, than he himself did; and when their argument ended he frankly owned himself wrong. The ten minutes it had taken had made them know each other better than ten months of ordinary intercourse; and when she went on to talk of professional difficulties and discouragements, and the rare successes which, to her, seemed amply to make up for them, it did not once seem strange that she should be saying all this to him; he only felt as if he suddenly saw a new world—a world where the glory of their common work lay, not in the intellectual triumphs it brought them, but in its power to lighten some of the heaviest darkness in life. The words

which, as she said them, brought a faint colour into Mary Chaston's face—"The profession seems to me, most nearly to touch the ideal life, one in which it is possible to live for those who are here with us"—so filled his mind that he could say nothing to her in answer, while she walked towards a bookcase for a scientific book she had promised to lend him. He took it, thanked her, and said good-bye—still thinking.

On reaching his own room the first thing that caught his eye lying under his reading lamp, was a cynical novel he had been reading late the night before. Two or three of the cutting epigrammatic sentences he had enjoyed then came before his mind now; and, feeling as if the book represented the hardness he had never before recognised in himself, he flung it with a furious impulse into the fire.

For long after this his work seemed to him impossible almost, the ideal Mary Chaston's words had shown him was always with him, and, in the light of it, the self-contempt with which he looked at his own life strengthened daily. At intervals the hard, narrow view which had been his for all these years seemed enough, but only at intervals. He could not settle again into the callousness from which he had been roused; and, as each day's work forced on him the knowledge that his view of life and the higher one that she had shown him were incompatible, the conflict, from being half unconscious, became intensely earnest.

THE DEAD.

ONLY to touch once more the "vanished hand,"

Only once more the silenced voice to hear,

Only to know the hovering shade is near!

Though the blank veil, no man can understand,
Falls between us, and the mysterious land

Where they are dwelling whom we hold so dear,

Our granted prayer would crush, the doubt, the
fear,

That twines in sorrow's cord the bitterest strand;
So, from the vigil of the sheeted Dead.

So, from the grave with all its tended flowers,

The wailing from the hearts uncomfited,

Goes up to Heaven through all life's lonely hours:
As soft as dew the answer from above,

"For thee I lived, I died, whose name is Love."

THE CEDIPUS REX AT CAMBRIDGE.

ALWAYS, when I am sitting in the little Theatre Royal, Cambridge, waiting for the play to begin, I try to fancy what the old plays were like which were acted in the College Halls; ay, and at King's, in the ante-chapel; at Jesus, in the chapel itself.

Somebody with leisure, and with the University library at hand, ought to write a book on the subject. I do not remember much in Mr. Mullinger's volumes; in Willis and Clark the record is very meagre. One asks, for instance, what miracle plays, if any, were popular at the University? Cornwall had its favourites, some of which are still extant in the old tongue of "West Wales." Coventry had a large repertory: the town where enterprising publicans still manage occasionally to get up a Lady Godiva show was for many years the chosen seat of miracle plays. These, however, were acted by the clergy for the people; what went on at the Universities would rather be for the students for their own amusement, just as the benchers, at the Inns of Court, used to dance, not to please their clients, but to warm their own toes.

The "Chamberdekyngs," who at Oxford and Cambridge lived four or five in a room, poring all day over crabbed M.S. books, pawning their cloaks for a little "subsist" out of the step-motherly University chest, in the hope that by a remittance from home they might redeem them by Saint Scholastica's Day—these poor lads were not likely to act anything that the public would like to hear. Their plays would probably contain a good deal of logic-chopping, and would pretty certainly be altogether in the dog Latin of the schoolmen. If they tried anything for the public, it would most likely be in the Long Vacation, as they wandered home, picking up a living along the way by conjuring tricks, viol-playing—anything that would earn a "poor scholar" welcome and hospitality.

Of this early time there are absolutely no records. At the great fair at Sturbridge-by-Barnwell—in which suburb the A.D.C., immortalised by Mr. Burnand, used to act—a fair that is still kept up, though sadly shorn of its glories, there were probably, as at other like places, miracle plays. But what the Universities were then doing in the way of plays is not recorded. The records begin later, when the drama was growing fashionable, and the Inns of Court used to present plays to the King or Queen.

A few items may be interesting. Peterhouse began to act plays in 1571. The bursars' accounts for that year contain: "pro duodecim libris candelarum pro comedia" (for twelve pounds of candles for the play) "ii.s. vi.d."

In 1548, Protector Somerset's and also

the King's Companies acted in the Hall of King's College, six shillings being in each case handed to the players (*ludionibus*) as a gratuity. This was in summer; the usual time was Christmas, when, in 1577, "a comedie was played publicklye in the hawlle" of Jesus, the college paying the cost of setting up the stage. At Trinity, the annual performance of plays in hall during the twelve days of Christmas is enjoined in Queen Elizabeth's statutes (1559). The head lecturer (*primus lector*) is to represent a tragedy or a comedy; the other eight lecturers are to give four plays between them. Any lecturer failing in this duty is to pay ten shillings fine.

The admirable order with which the present race of "undergrads" listen to the plays was not observed by their predecessors. The windows suffered. A regular entry in the junior bursar's book is:

"Item for settinge in of lvi. quarrells of glass which were broken at ye plaies, iiii.s. viii.d. Item for repairinge the hall after the plaies ended, xij.d."

At last a watch was set for the offenders, the cost of keeping it being considerably heavier than that of setting in the "quarrells."

"Item. Given to those that watched the glasse windows one comedie night, and for torches which they used, vi.s."

At Queen's, there was a special room for the play acting. It was rebuilt in 1638, when the bursar's book contains entries for "timber and tiles for the new stage house." In the Muniment Room, over the entrance gate, is still preserved the press "for the Acting Cloaths." What were these like? How far did the gownsmen, when they acted Terence or Plautus, go in for classical costume?

There must have been some splendour of decoration, for Roger Ascham, writing in 1550 from Antwerp to his friend Edward Raven, Fellow of St. John's, and trying to impress on him the magnificence of that city, says:

"It surpasses all others that I ever saw, as much as our hall, when dressed up for a Christmas play, surpasses its ordinary appearance."

At Saint John's in 1618, a play called *Stoicus Vapulans* (the Stoic who gets a flogging) was so well acted as to call forth the lively admiration of Sir Symonds d'Ewes. Three years earlier, at Trinity, the celebrated *Ignoramus* and other plays were acted before James the First; and at that college play-acting went on (I think

even under the Puritan rule) till the end of the seventeenth century. Grand Duke Cosmo of Tuscany, who came over in 1669, was regaled with a play in the "Comedy Room"—"rather small than spacious," he says in his *Travels*. The college seems to have felt the space was too limited, for next year there is an item for making "two doors into the acting-room out of the audit chamber," which latter thus became almost a part of the theatre.* Part of this "Acting Room" still exists in the Master's Lodge, to which Bentley was, among many other high-handed proceedings, charged with adding it. In 1724, Dr. Parne tells how in his undergraduate days, "they used to have to keep Christmas. The senior Sophist and Bachelor were masters of the revels, and ordered all things in college. One came in with drums, the other with trumpets before him. The fellows dined and supped promiscuously with the scholars. There was a pole or cole-staff, called the Stang, on which the servants and scholars were carried by way of punishment, the latter chiefly for missing chapel, and put in "Stangate hole."

This is very different from our University plays, one chief feature of which is the intense earnestness with which the undergraduate part of the audience enter into the affair; listening with bated breath, staying till the end of each act, even for the well-deserved applause which they are burning to give. No fun now at the Greek play; what fun there is is confined at Oxford to Commemoration, where the men shout themselves hoarse by cheering "the ladies with the pink bonnets," the ditto with the green, and so on; though, nowadays, the fashion of hats has somewhat modified the traditional formula. At Cambridge it centres chiefly in the Senate House at the giving of Degrees, when that big wooden spoon is slung along a rope and passed from one gallery to the other, and at the proper moment, solemnly lowered on the head of the last in the list of Wranglers. That is all that remains of the days when the "Terræ filius," (a sort of University privileged jester) used to blurt out his coarse personalities against townspeople and college dignitaries. Milton liked plays, and no doubt took a part in them "when Jonson's learned sock was on"; Ignoramus may have been acted over again in his day. Now it is impossible to read what was then the admired master-

piece of George Ruggle, Fellow of Clare. I should say a reproduction of that play is simply impossible. Pegasus, with ass's ears, and a hogged mane, and a big white spot close to its tail—a cross between a donkey and a tinker's piebald nag, would nowadays scarcely win a laugh from the rowdiest small college man; and what would the Girton girls think of him? That kind of thing is left to the children and the pantomimes, and to the class of adults who are amused at a clown grinning through a horse collar. And who would laugh when this absurd Pegasus, called on for a prologue, sings out "Qvan | do | qui | dem," as if he was saying "hee-haw"; and when the groom, under pretence of furnishing him with a pair of spectacles, dexterously puts a pair of blinkers over his eyes, and a bit between his teeth? Nor is there much to call forth a smile in Lawyer Dullman, the chief character (except, of course, Ignoramus himself), whose brother sends him a letter in Ciceronian Latin, beginning: "If you're engrossing documents, 'tis well. I am engrossing documents." What wit, again, is there in saying to a woman, however unattractive, "you've got the face of an old cow. You call yourself Rosabella; your name does not agree with your record. If I gave you a name I should call you Hag or Hobgoblin"? And, besides the dulness, the coarseness, fit for the Court in which Lady Essex, dressed as a page, held her lover's horse while he and her husband were fighting. If most of the learned societies' plays were like Ignoramus, one cannot regret that with the seventeenth century the practice of play-acting died out alike at the Inns of Court and at the Universities. Then the mantle of dulness fell on Oxford and Cambridge; Cambridge men got wholly sodden in audit ale. What intellect they had spent itself in epigrams. Some of the Latin and Greek ones are good. These, in English, are not bad.

Of a Trinity College don who had a trick of getting under the table between dinner and bed-time, one of his comrades wrote:

Here lies a Doctor in Divinity,
A Fellow, too, of Trinity.
He knows about as much divinity
As other Fellows do—of Trinity.

And this is not bad, on two dons of Jesus College, called Sheepshanks:

The Satyrs of old were monsters of note
With the head of a man and the shanks of a goat;
But the Satyrs of Jesus all Satyrs surpass,
They've the shanks of a sheep and the head of an ass.

* Perhaps it was used as the "attying chamber" of which mention occurs in the records.

Oxford meanwhile—which still kept up its *Carmina Quadragesimalia*, Shrove tide verses—kept up a maundering sort of Jacobitism—very maundering, but enough to make George the Second send a troop of horse there, at the time he was giving “the King’s Library” to Cambridge.*

Well, I have only got Willis and Clark, and a little vellum-bound copy of *Ignoramus*, date 1630, “as acted the second time the King came to Cambridge.” But I hear that Cooper’s “*Annals*” is the book, if any one likes to go deeper into the antiquarian branch of the subject; and there is Mr. Burnand, with his pleasant account of the A.D.C., and what difficulties they had in being allowed to act.

We have changed all that now; we do not act *Ignoramus* or *The Stoic Getting a Flogging*, nor yet the things in which Mr. Burnand and his fellows delighted. And instead of trouble with our dons, we have them helping us. Here, on the Committee of the Greek Play, are a Professor, the Public Orator, and half-a-score of Fellows.

And what was the play which this year they delighted to honour? Simply the most repulsive story that Greek art ever consecrated. No wonder there were only men actors; last year’s pleasant innovation—when Miss Case, a Girton girl, played *Athene*, the patron goddess of the violet-crowned city, and looked so grandly lovely in her glistening robes with her *ægis* on her arm—being changed back to the old custom. Why these repulsive Greek stories are what they are, who knows? They are survivals, says Mr. Andrew Lang, in his very interesting “*Myth, Ritual, and Religion*,” from savagetimes. In all of them he finds traces of the old savagery. Even *Artemis*, “Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,” appears in the old myths—that is, in those connected with the *Ephesus Temple*—as a monstrous, many-breasted deity, worshipped with bear-dances, just as Red Indians dress themselves in the skins of the animal whose feast they celebrate.

So at some feasts of *Dionysus*, the god in whose honour these Greek plays were acted, instead of the stately Chorus walking solemnly around the altar in the orchestra,

* On this the Cambridge epigram was:

Our King to Oxford sent a troop of horse,
For Tories own no argument but force;
To Cambridge books with equal sense he sent,
For Whigs obey no force but argument.

I cannot remember the Oxford answer; it was very clever. The last line is:

The King sent them the books, because he clearly saw
How much that loyal body wanted learning.

and the actors by their staid reserve lifted above the ordinary level of humanity, there was a wild rout of frenzied worshippers who, in their excitement, tore live kids or dogs to pieces and wrapped themselves in the bleeding skins. In the oldest myths his incest comes in as matter of course; and that such a play as *Œdipus the King* should have taken the highest rank in the Greek drama—that the *Œdipus* story should have been the most popular of any, shows that, though such things had by that time come to be considered very shocking in practice, to talk about them did not call up in the Greek mind of Pericles’s day the loathing which it does among us. We do not reckon *Titus Andronicus* or even *Pericles*, Prince of Tyre, as the highest productions of English genius; we prefer not to believe they are Shakespeare’s; for when such a story is acted, one feels the horror of it a great deal more than when one reads it.

Of course one has to bear in mind that, according to the Greek idea, whatever happened, happened by the fate of the gods; and the gods, even when the old myths about them had been pruned of most of the original savagery by the refinement of later times, were not a moral set. When “it was fated” that a man should do a hateful thing, the Greeks thought he was rather to be pitied than otherwise for doing it. *Œdipus*, therefore, when he murders his father and marries his mother, does so by the working of a doom, from which there is no escape, and which has been pronounced on him before he was born.

Laius, his father, son of *Labdacus*, descendant of *Cadmus*, the Phœnician Prince, who, according to legend, built a wall round *Thebes*, drawing the stones one on another to the music of *Harmonia*’s lyre, was thriving but childless. Like other childless parents, he went to ask the god at *Delphi* if he had any hope of offspring. The answer he got was: “Best so remain; for if thou hast a child, that child will slay thee.” Well, fear is strong, but passion is sometimes stronger. *Laius* at last has a child; but as soon as it is born, the dread of the doom comes over him, and he thinks to avert it by putting the babe to death. He is not hardened enough to do this himself, or to have it done in his presence. He adopts the plan which till Christian times—perhaps later—was the common way among the Greeks of getting rid of a child whom the father did not wish to bring up. He gave it to his herdsman to be “exposed” on *Mount Cithæron*.

Infanticide seems to us a heinous sin; it is committed, like other sins, even in nineteenth-century England. In China, it is said to be very common. "What's the use," argues the Chinaman, "of bringing in another mouth where there's not meat enough for those who are there already?" The deed does not touch his moral sense at all. So among the later Greeks, a man might be patriotic, warm-hearted, a good husband; and yet, whether or not he should rear up his new-born babe, he would think was a matter about which he, and he alone, was qualified and entitled to judge.

It was much the same among the Romans, though they had not the Greek objection to large families. Unless the father took the newly-born babe in his arms and held it up to heaven, he was supposed not to have admitted it into the family, and in that case it probably disappeared.

Well, Laius's herdsman was struck with pity; he did not like to leave the poor young thing to die on the mountain. Its father had already run a skewer through the tendons of the heels, so that it might be carried head downwards like a hare or rabbit. So the herdsman showed it to the herdsman of King Polybus, of Corinth, whose cattle browsed on the other slope of Cithæron. "Give it me," said his comrade. "Our Queen has just lost her child; ten to one she'll be glad to rear it instead." So Laius's babe became the son of Polybus, whose wife never told him of the exchange. The scars in the heels remained, and account for the name *Cedipus* ("Swell-foot"); but the boy grew into a man of whom any parents might be proud, and lived happily with his supposed parents, till one day at a feast, a fellow who had too much wine on board said to him; "You're no son of Polybus, young man; so don't you think to be playing king over us." Stung to the heart, the lad appealed to Merope, his supposed mother; but getting no satisfaction from her, he went to the universal inquiry office at Delphi. He had better have stayed away, for the god flatly refused to tell him his parents' names, at the same time warning him of his doom to be his father's slayer, his mother's husband.

Laius, too, uncertain about the fate of the babe he had "exposed," was going to Delphi to learn about it; and the two met where three roads meet, and the King's charioteer rudely called out to the traveller to clear the way; and when

Cedipus indignantly walked on without budging an inch, he whipped his horses and tried to ride him down. But the young man turned upon him, and met the old King's angry words with a blow that hurled him lifeless from the chariot. He then turned on the attendants and slew all but one, who, escaping to Thebes, excused his cowardice by saying they had been set on by a party of robbers.

Cedipus took the King's car and horses, drove them to Corinth, and, giving them as a parting gift to Polybus, turned his back for ever on his old home, hoping thus to avert the doom of which he had already unwittingly fulfilled half. His wanderings brought him to Thebes, where he found the people in great trouble. The Sphinx, a man-eating monster, half woman, half lion, had been sent by the gods to afflict them. It had a riddle: "What creature goes on all fours in the morning, on two at midday, and on three in the evening?"

Daily it came near and asked an answer, and, as no answer was forthcoming, it made a daily meal off their young men and maidens.

No wonder the Thebans had not set on foot any great search after their lost King; their own misery was too crushing, depopulation stared them in the face. Creon, brother of Laius's widow, made proclamation that whoso should solve the riddle should be at once crowned King, and also should have his sister *Jocasta* to wife.

Cedipus heard this, thought for a moment, and then walked to the hill whence the Sphinx used to propound her riddle, and said:

"Man crawls in infancy, stands upright in full age, leans on a stick in the evening of life."

The monster threw herself headlong over a rock, and the stranger was saluted King and married his father's widow. Long and happily they lived together; they had two strong sons and two lovely daughters (one, *Antigone*, the poets have idealised into the perfect woman; tender in heart, yet strong as steel in affection).

Who among the Kings was like unto *Cedipus*, the honoured of all, the deliverer of the great city? Who so proud of him as *Jocasta*, she whose first wedded experience had been so unhappy? But though "the mill of the gods grindeth slowly, it grindeth very sure."

At last the doom began to work. A blight spread over the lands; it was not

only that the crops failed, the corn lay unripened rotting in the furrows. The plague was on the cattle, too; and on the women, whose babes died before they were born. Of course, Apollo at Delphi was appealed to; and grim and horrible came the answer:

"Blood; the land is defiled with Laius's blood. That is calling for vengeance, and, till the man who shed it is slain or driven forth, the plague will continue."

That is how the play opens. Mr. Villiers Stanford's weirdly-beautiful Wagnerian overture is almost finished; the curtain rises; and grouped round the altar in front of Œdipus's palace are priests, and old men, and youths, and boys, each with his bough of supplication—olive, it should have been, box did instead—wreathed with white wool. To them comes forth the King; and the Priest of Zeus explains why they are there; and whilst the King is telling how he has sent his brother-in-law to Delphi, Creon returns and reports the answer, and Œdipus solemnly adjures everyone to help him, and lays the bitterest of all bitter curses on him who, knowing aught of what befell Laius, fails to tell what he knows.

Then Tiresias, the famous blind seer, whom he had sent for sometime before, is led on the stage; but the moment he confronts the King, the spirit comes over him and he knows him to be the murderer. This is one of the grandly dramatic situations of which the play—the most dramatic of all the classical dramas—is so full. Œdipus, blind throughout—his mental blindness being often inexplicable to the audience, who know the whole story—cannot understand why Tiresias wants to hurry away. He gets angry, insults the old seer, and though the Chorus of Theban elders begs him to desist, will not leave him alone; till at last, losing patience, the seer says: "Thou art the man."

"I?" replies the King. "Ah, what will not greed of wealth and power prompt men to do?" He thinks it is a plot—Creon, eager to gain the kingdom; Tiresias, like another Balaam, hungering for the reward of divination. So he will hear no more, and goes into the palace, leaving the seer to tell his tale to the astonished elders, whose politic answer is: "A seer is but a man after all. King Œdipus saved our city; we stick by him till Apollo in person gives us cause to change our views."

Then there is a quarrel between Creon and Œdipus—the weakest part of the

Cambridge performance; for, the King scolded, and it is very hard in such a scene even for the best of actors to avoid doing so.

Jocasta, saddened with the foreboding of evil to come, appears as a peacemaker; and she and her husband sift the matter, with the result that Œdipus is stricken with a sudden fear that he did kill Laius, his only hope being in that saying of the escaped attendant: "It was an armed party that set on us."

This attendant, therefore, who has taken to cattle-tending, must be sent for. Jocasta pleads against further inquiry; her mind is divided, she has a strange presentiment, and yet the facts of Laius's death seem to give the lie to the oracle. "I won't believe it," she cries; "oracles are but vain words." And in this "impiety" she is strengthened, when a messenger from Corinth announces that Polybus is dead. "There! Why, thou wast doomed to slay him," she exclaims. But soon Œdipus's close cross-questioning brings out the truth. "Polybus was not thy father, O King," says the messenger. "I was when young a herdsman on Cithæron, and I received thee from a herdsman of Laius."

Jocasta at once sees the truth, and on her knees, in the most pathetic scene in the play—and wonderfully well Mr. Platts filled the terribly difficult part—implores the King to question no further. He, thinking she dreads to find him of lowly birth, will go on; and she, in agony, rushes into the palace to hang herself. Meanwhile the Chorus rattles out a jocund strain. Œdipus, found on Cithæron, must be son of a wood-nymph, whom some god—great Pan, perhaps Apollo himself—has honoured with his embrace.

The sanguine elders are thus rejoicing when the escaped attendant comes on.

"Yes," says the messenger from Corinth; "that is the very man who gave me the babe."

"And whose babe was it?" cries Œdipus.

"Oh, master, don't ask me," cries the attendant, grovelling at the King's feet.

But the truth is extorted from him; and at last Œdipus feels that Tiresias was right. Casting his crown to the ground, he rushes away. After a choric song, a messenger comes on and tells of Jocasta's death, and of his having blinded himself as unworthy to look on the earth. This is the plan in the "classical drama"—to tell, by word of mouth, things too sad

to act. "It weakens a play;" but the other parts of *Cedipus the King* are so strong, that the weakening is not felt.

The closing scene, where the blind King staggers forward groping his way, and begs Creon for a few moments' speech with his daughters before he goes forth a wanderer, is more stagey but less pathetic than the change that comes over Jocasta when, in the compass of a few lines, her scorn of oracles and such like gives place to the certainty that *Cedipus* is her son.

Such is the play, one which, perhaps, never ought to have been attempted, and to act which would test the powers of the best trained artistes. At Cambridge, some say it was a glorious failure. There was not, indeed, the light and hope which shone over so many scenes in "*The Furies*" two years ago. It was tragedy without the slightest relief; but still, even apart from the grand triumph of Mr. Stanford's music, it was a success. The whole thing proved that our age is certainly better than that of which *Ignoramus* was the stock-piece.

ENGLISH PLAYS ON FOREIGN STAGES.

IT is a sufficiently well-known fact that our managers, during a period by no means limited to the last half-century, have been indebted for many of their most successful hits to adaptations, more or less literal, of pieces originally produced at one or other of the Parisian theatres. Formerly, in the days when Mr. Jeffs, the recognised purveyor and retailer of dramatic novelties, flourished in the Burlington Arcade, his little shop was constantly resorted to by writers of various capabilities, eagerly on the look-out for the latest importation from across the Channel, and striving to anticipate their rivals in the acquisition of the coveted treasure. Some of them, whose knowledge of the Gallic vernacular was comparatively limited, were content, with the help of a dictionary, to turn into questionable English the material before them, without giving themselves any further trouble; of which class of playwrights the individual described by Albert Smith in his "*Scattergood Family*," under the name of Bodge, is a not altogether exaggerated specimen.

Others, gifted with more tact and talent, like the late Mr. Planché, while retaining the main incidents of the original piece,

skilfully adapted them to the taste of English playgoers, by the suppression of unnecessary details; carefully eschewing anything resembling a literal copy of their model. Latterly, indeed, mere translation has entirely gone out of fashion, and, with few exceptions, plays derived from foreign sources have been so altered and arranged in accordance with British ideas and habits as to be scarcely recognisable.

It is, however, worthy of remark that, notwithstanding the extent of our obligations to French dramatists, our neighbours have hitherto been singularly chary of returning the compliment; whether because they have sufficient materials of their own without borrowing from others, or because our native productions are not precisely appreciated by them, matters little. Shakespeare has certainly figured, although not to his advantage, on the Parisian boards; neither the garbled version of the Academician Ducis, nor the more intelligible adaptations of *Othello* by Alfred de Vigny, and of *Hamlet* by Alexandre Dumas, having succeeded in popularising the Bard of Avon on the banks of the Seine; while George Sand's *Comme Il Vous Plaira—As You Like It*—although interpreted by the best actors of the *Comédie Française*, proved a disastrous failure.

One of the earliest instances of an English play having been transplanted to the French boards dates as far back as 1760, in which year the song-writer and dramatist Charles Collé produced an imitation of Dodsley's *The King and the Miller of Mansfield*, under the title of *Le Roi et le Meunier*, subsequently altered into *La Partie de Chasse d'Henri Quatre*. This comedy, the cast of which included the celebrated Prévile and his wife, was very successful, and became a stock-piece of the *Théâtre Français*. In the same year an indifferent version of Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, called *Caliste*, met with a cold reception, and only ran ten nights; "more," as a contemporary writer pithily remarks, "than it deserved."

In September, 1763, *Blanche et Guiscard*, feebly imitated by Saurin from Thomson's *Tancred and Sigismunda*, was listened to with profound indifference, and disappeared from the bills after the third representation. The same Saurin, however, was more fortunate five years later; his *Beverley*, adapted from *The Gamester*, obtained a signal triumph, mainly owing to the admirable acting of Molé in the title-part; and, although temporarily in-

terrupted by the death of Queen Marie Leczinska, was afterwards revived with similar success.

Coming nearer to our own day, it may be mentioned that the only play of Sheridan which, to my knowledge, has figured on the French stage, is the *School for Scandal*, produced early in the present century, under the title of *L'Ecole de la Médisance*, and summarily withdrawn. No better fate awaited the late Lord Lytton's *Money* at the *Théâtre Historique*; poorly translated and indifferently acted, it failed altogether to interest the spectators, and was speedily consigned to the limbo of oblivion.

Before proceeding further, it may be as well to state that in thus recording some of the dramatic productions—operas not included—which have been translated in a more or less mutilated form from our boards to those of the “gay city,” I by no means pretend to give a complete list of them, merely jotting down those I have read of or seen acted; and this being premised, any involuntary omission on my part will have been satisfactorily accounted for.

One very successful and still popular “adaptation,” with which many of our readers may be familiar, was that of Jack Sheppard, at the *Porte Saint Martin*, transformed into *Les Chevaliers du Brouillard* (*The Knights of the Fog*), and remodelled in accordance with French ideas of life in London during the last century.

Ainsworth—at that time quietly vegetating in his retreat at Hurstpierpoint—was specially invited to witness the performance, and very much astonished he was when he did so. It was next so impossible to recognise a trace of the original drama in this extraordinary imbroglio. One scene followed another without any apparent connection, and who the different personages were, or what business they had there at all, remained a profound and unexplained mystery.

When George the Third, desirous of making Jack's acquaintance, actually visited him in prison, the audience evidently regarded the incident as a trait of national eccentricity; and, when a gauze curtain was drawn across the stage to simulate a Metropolitan fog, and everybody behind it tumbled about and jostled each other, it was at once accepted as an exact reproduction of a normal London atmosphere.

Nevertheless, no money having been spared in getting up the piece, the general

effect was exceedingly picturesque and striking. Much cannot, indeed, be said in favour of the representatives of “Jonathan Vild” and “Tamise Darrell;” but their shortcomings were more than redeemed by the really admirable acting of Madame Marie Laurent, who was altogether so attractive a highwayman that, at the close of the drama, when, by an unauthorised violation of historical truth, extenuating circumstances were found for the culprit, and a reprieve granted, Ainsworth—as he afterwards told me—applauded as vigorously as anyone in the theatre.

A version of *No Thoroughfare* at the Ambigu, under the title of *L'Abîme*, proved highly successful, and as much may be said of Miss Multon, the plot of which was taken—with the usual liberties—from Mr. North Peat's translation of “*East Lynne*,” called *Lady Isabel*. It is but fair to add that the latter piece was chiefly indebted for its favourable reception to the very remarkable personation of the heroine by Mdlle. Fargueil.

In September, 1863, when Charles Mathews appeared at the *Variétés* in *Cool* as a *Cucumber*, metamorphosed into *Un Anglais Timide*, his first night's venture was by no means plain sailing. The early portion of the piece went exceedingly well, but it dragged horribly towards the close; nor was the introduction of a patter song—with guitar accompaniment—of which the audience understood not a single word, a happy inspiration. At one moment murmurs of discontent were distinctly audible, and the farce would inevitably have been consigned to the tomb of the *Capulets*, had not the actor's presence of mind opportunely come to the rescue, and by hastening the “*dénouement*,” triumphantly brought down the curtain. “On the second night,” to quote Mathews' letter to a London journal, “after wholesale cutting, it went off with ‘one roar.’”

I now come to a long-forgotten piece, also of *Britannic* origin; any mention of which, not on account of its intrinsic merits, but because of a curious circumstance is connected with it, I have purposely reserved until now. As far back as the year 1840, the bills of the little *Théâtre St. Antoine* announced the performance of “*L'Abbaye de Penmarch*,” by Messrs. Tournemine and Thackeray. Struck by the latter name, a popular English dramatist, then residing in Paris, naturally imagined that the author of “*Vanity*

Fair" might possibly be responsible for the novelty; but ascertained, on enquiry, that the real Simon Pure was no other than Mr. Thomas James Thackeray, a relative of the novelist, who had already contributed several dramatic productions to the London stage. Moreover, he discovered that the piece had been not over-skillfully adapted from the "Innkeeper's Daughter," an old melodrama, by George Soane, founded on the well-known ballad, "Mary, the Maid of the Inn;" and, his curiosity satisfied, troubled himself no further about the matter.

On the publication of a bibliography of William Makepeace Thackeray a few years ago, "L'Abbaye de Penmarch" having inadvertently been included in it, this supposed production of his pen necessarily became an object of interest to collectors of his works, and every remaining copy of the piece to be found in Paris was immediately bought up by an enterprising London bookseller, and readily disposed of at prices varying from ten shillings to two guineas, each purchaser congratulating himself on so precious an acquisition. Unfortunately, as it turned out, some incredulous person took it into his head to institute a searching inquiry, the result of which completely changed the aspect of affairs; so that the once coveted rarity is now a worthless drug in the market, and its possessors are left to console themselves as best they may for the loss of their money.

During a stay at Heidelberg in 1858, I witnessed there the performance of a clever adaptation of Cumberland's Jew, and also of the Orphan of Lowood (Jane Eyre); and to these may be added—although I never saw them played—successful versions of Palgrave Simpson's Second Love, and All for Her, besides Oxenford's farce, A Day Well Spent, arranged for the Viennese stage by the actor, Nestroy. Once, however, in the course of my sojourn in the little university town, I unexpectedly fell in with an old acquaintance. On taking my usual seat in the theatre, and glancing at the bill, the chief item of which was a comedy with an uncommonly long name, signifying "He has done the right thing at last," I calmly awaited the rising of the curtain, and before ten words had been spoken, found myself listening to "je vous le donne en mille," the irrepressible Paul Pry. The representative of the hero, whose conception of the character was, to say the least, peculiar, and who emphasised every sentence

he uttered with a flourish of the traditional umbrella, was nevertheless quaintly, if somewhat ponderously droll; while the young lady who personated Phoebe, established in the course of the evening a claim on my gratitude by kindly forbearing to disturb my recollections of her predecessor Vestris, and *not* singing, "Cherry Ripe!"

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER II. OWLS.

OUTSIDE in the garden all was coolness and stillness. The woods hardly rustled that quiet evening, and all their living inhabitants seemed to be asleep. The old red-brick house lay dark in the moonlight; its rather fantastic towers and chimney-tops standing out clear; its long rows of windows shining; its ivy and Virginia creeper hanging in silvered masses. On the lawn there were spaces of clear light and deep shadow, and the great dark cedars stretched their arms motionless.

Even outside here, in the free air, with his old friend, Paul seemed to find it difficult to go on with his subject. Colonel Ward smoked his pipe, as they walked up and down, and waited for him as long as he could. At last he said, with real anxiety in his voice: "Talk away, my boy. What is all this about? Hang it, Paul, you are not in earnest, are you?"

"Yes, I'm in earnest."

"But nothing positive—nothing settled, of course?"

"Well, yes, it is settled; at least I hope so. Yes, Colonel, it was settled just before I went abroad; but we agreed to say nothing about it. I suppose everybody will know soon now. I don't see why they shouldn't."

"Why didn't you tell me before?" said Colonel Ward rather sharply.

"You must not mind about that, you know," the young man answered quickly. "Mrs. Percival wouldn't let me say anything, and, of course, I had to do as they wished. She wanted me to wait till they came here; it would make such a lot of talk at Woolsborough. I am going to Woolsborough now, though—but I came here first—partly on purpose to tell you."

From Paul's manner, and rather hurried way of talking, it was plain that he did

not expect his old friend to be much pleased with the news he had to tell him. Colonel Ward listened to him gravely, and did not speak quite at once.

"Ah! Then I may be supposed to know who it is," he said presently. "Mrs. Percival—well, there may be some excuse for her. Women don't always know at once what view to take, and, no doubt, she found she had to do with an obstinate young fool. But Percival was very wrong. He ought to have interfered. He ought to have put a stop to the thing at once. That is what an honourable man would have done."

"I don't see why," said Paul.

"You would see plainly enough in another man's case. Percival was your guardian. A year ago his wife's niece came to live with him—a girl whose parents were good-for-nothing, and who had been badly trained in every way."

"Look here, Colonel, you always say what you like——"

"Yes, and I mean to do so still."

"You must remember that you don't know Miss Darrell. You have only seen her once."

"I know all about her," said the Colonel. "I grant you she is a very pretty girl. Clever too; I haven't a doubt of that. But she has nothing, and for that and twenty other reasons she is not the right match for you. And the Percivals ought not to have listened to such a thing for a moment. They were bound in honour to resist the very notion. A young fellow with a good property like you, with your talents, and a grand future before you! Why, hang it, Paul, you might marry anybody. What the deuce was old Percival thinking about? I always knew he was a fool, but hang me if I knew he was a knave."

"He couldn't have prevented it. He had nothing to do with it," said Paul.

"My dear fellow, that's nonsense. I wonder at Mrs. Percival. But I suppose she took the sentimental view; she always was soft-hearted. And this is not the first mistake she has made, I am sorry to say. How long has this affair been going on?"

"For a year. Ever since I first saw her. But I said nothing till I went down from Oxford the other day. And you are awfully unfair to the Percivals, you know, Colonel. Mrs. Percival thought at first I was too young; and then she wouldn't have anything said about it all the summer."

"I see nothing in that, if she allowed the thing to go on at all," said Colonel

Ward dismally; he was torn between loyalty to his old love and faithfulness to the interests of Paul Romaine. "Do you write to the young lady?"

"Of course; we are engaged," said Paul.

"And do you mean to tell me that nobody knows anything about it?"

"Canon and Mrs. Percival; nobody else. They have not even told Vincent."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. The less people the better, she thought. And I think Vincent isn't always the pleasantest fellow in the world; and as he was to be there all the summer, perhaps it was better for her that he shouldn't know—because he and I don't get on particularly well. He might have made himself disagreeable. But of course Mrs. Percival did not tell me any reasons like those; I have only guessed them. She said it was best that only she and the Canon should know. And it was easy, as I was going abroad."

"If the thing was allowed at all, I see no reason for keeping it secret," said Colonel Ward. "I shall ask her to explain that to me one of these days."

Then he and Paul walked the whole length of the lawn, past the cedars, from light to shadow, and back to light again, without saying anything more. The Colonel in his honest old heart was very unhappy. Though he would not exactly say so, he thought Mrs. Percival had done very wrong. There could be no doubt, really, that the whole thing was her doing. With a penniless niece on her hands, of course she had encouraged Paul. A young fellow at college, open, enthusiastic, simple-hearted, he was ready to fall in love with anybody; and Miss Darrell was a very attractive girl. All the unhappy history of her father and mother had been told to the Colonel by Mrs. Percival herself; the girl was friendless, homeless, penniless. The chance of such a marriage as this for her was no doubt a great temptation to her aunt; but, to Colonel Ward's mind, a temptation which ought at all costs to have been resisted. He was a man of strict notions and high old-fashioned ideas; his prejudices, therefore, were strong; and Mrs. Percival's niece was just the kind of girl who always made him reflect on the degeneracy of the age. He did not like her; and the news of her engagement to Paul seemed to him worse than any news he had heard since Sir Paul Romaine died.

The Colonel was hurt, too, though he did not wish to show it. Under his stiff

grey outside there was a great deal of warm affection, with the sensitiveness which is its wrong side. He had thought that there was always a perfect confidence between himself and Paul, whom he loved as if he were his son. He had flattered himself that all Paul's tastes, and ways, and weaknesses, were known to him, as they would have been known to Paul's father; and he had never really much dreaded the influence of the Percivals, though he talked about it; feeling sure that Paul was his own boy in spite of them. It was something of a shock to him to find how far that influence had now extended itself; that Paul, body and soul, was to belong all his life to the Percivals; and that this thing had been going on for a whole year past, while he, the blind old friend, had thought that Paul was only too much wrapped up in reading for honours.

"And this is a settled thing!" said the Colonel at last. He spoke sadly, but not angrily; after all, young people must be young, and it was not Paul with whom he was angry. He himself had remained unmarried always for the sake of a foolish woman. "No hope of any alteration!" he went on, perhaps hardly speaking to Paul.

"No fear of any," said the young man, smiling. "Look here, Colonel, it makes me awfully happy, you know, and you must congratulate me."

"No, I can't do that," said the Colonel.

"You will when you know Celia a little better."

The Colonel shook his head.

"I won't deny, my friend," he said, "that this news of yours has startled me considerably. I can't talk to you about it now. I must go home and think it over. Good-night."

"No, Colonel, I won't let you," said Paul, taking hold of his arm. "You must be convinced; I'm going to argue with you."

"You may as well argue with the owls, my boy. I'm a kill-joy, I know. I'm a prophet of evil; but I don't like this engagement of yours. Miss Darrell is pretty; in fact, she comes as near being beautiful as any woman I ever saw; and no doubt she has taking manners. But even if she had money as well, she would not be the wife I should choose for you. I believe in heredity, and she comes of a bad stock. Her tendencies are horsey, and I hate horsey women. Her father was an idle, dissipated chap, never to be seen off a race-course; and her mother, poor thing! was as weak as water."

At that moment the silence of the night was broken by a wild "Tu whit, tu whoo!" and an owl flew slowly across, in the moonshine, from one great tree to another. Paul was in fact arguing with the owls, it seemed.

"I know all that," he said, in answer to the Colonel. "But I don't know why she should be made responsible for their sins."

He might very well have been angry; but he had a philosophy of his own, which at this time took the form of perfect trust. In his mind he knew and trusted Celia so entirely, that his old friend's fears and prejudices were only worth a smile. He could not quarrel with him about anything so childish, knowing how easily Celia would captivate the Colonel, when she saw him again.

"Don't you think it will be a very good thing, Colonel," he went on, "if she knows more about horses than I do?"

"Well, yes; you are a muff about horses, certainly, Paul," Colonel Ward was obliged to confess. "You would get into endless scrapes in that line, and be cheated right and left, if you hadn't Ford and me to look after you. It is a miracle that your father's son should be so ignorant."

"She will manage all that," said Paul in his low pleasant voice. "She is very clever; she will look after everything. And she is tremendously kind and charitable, you know—and good—a thousand times too good for me. Why should I be obliged to marry a woman with money? This other arrangement seems quite right to me."

"To you—but to nobody else, my boy," said Colonel Ward.

Slowly, under Paul's influence, his indignation was melting away. It was plain that the lad was very happy, very much in love; and he was engaged; and of course there was not the smallest chance of his breaking off his engagement now; the Colonel could not expect or wish him to do that. The only feeling must be regret and deep vexation; but still, if Paul really knew anything about Miss Celia Darrell, a little hope might creep in. She might make him a tolerably good wife after all.

"Why, Paul," he said, "you talk as if you were a millionaire. You're not, you know."

"We shall do very well," said Paul quietly. "We shall live here; and by-and-by, if you push me on, I may try for Parliament. That is Mrs. Percival's idea."

"She is quite right, perfectly right,"

said the Colonel, highly pleased; and with this prospect he forgot all about Paul's bad news, and began building all sorts of castles in the air. This was the future he had always fancied for Paul; fearing all the time that he was too lazy, too refined, too studious, too artistic, even to put himself in the way of it. It even occurred once to the Colonel's mind that a spirited woman, if she was really worthy of Paul, might be his greatest help in a political career. Possibly, in Celia Darrell, her father's recklessness might take the form of a courage worth something. The Colonel was afraid not; for when he had seen her, and heard her talk, dislike had been mixed strongly with his admiration; but he began to think that he might have done the girl injustice.

So, instead of saying "good-night" early, and going home sulky to his cottage, Colonel Ward talked politics with Paul for another hour. Paul, to tell the truth, was tired and bored, and wished that he had said nothing about Parliament. At last he took advantage of a pause to change the subject suddenly. "I suppose the place will want thoroughly doing up all round," he said, looking up at his old towers.

"Nonsense! It is in perfectly good order."

"I know it isn't tumbling down; but it is not half smart enough. People make houses beautiful in these days, don't they? Mrs. Percival's house is awfully pretty. Of course this has a character of its own; but it is very old-fashioned; all the things in it are old-fashioned."

"Nonsense, Paul! They were good enough for your mother."

"Ah! but that was long ago. Well, she must look at it all when she comes here. There will be the servants to settle too—but Mrs. Percival will tell me all about that."

"It is not to be a long engagement, then?" said Colonel Ward, with something like a sigh.

"Why should it be?"

"Why? Because you are very young; too young to know your own mind."

"I have known it for a long time."

"Well, about the servants. Of course

you must have things correct. I know nothing. I have been out of the world too long. Mrs. Percival will tell you, as you say. One thing I feel pretty sure of—you will have to part with the Sabina."

"No; why should I do that?" exclaimed Paul almost angrily.

"Mrs. Sabin has been used to having her own way far too long; she won't knock under. And Sabin—to tell you the truth, I have not been satisfied with Sabin for some time past. He is too familiar; his manners are shocking. To-night, at dinner, I thought he was vulgar; broad grins the whole time. He has been a faithful servant, no doubt; but you will have to part with him; your wife will never endure him. She will like to have her own way in the house."

"Poor old Sabin! I never noticed anything wrong. He always does what I tell him. Of course, if Celia doesn't like him and his wife, that will be another affair; but I think she will. They are sure to be awfully nice to her. It would be a horrid bother to part with them."

"You will find a good many horrid bothers in store for you, my boy. You had better have been contented as you are."

"Why, Colonel, it was only this afternoon that you told me I ought to marry a sensible woman."

"I didn't mean what I said," answered the Colonel boldly.

It was near midnight when Paul walked with him up the dark avenue, and across the road to his own house. Under the arch at the door, Colonel Ward shook hands with him and muttered a few words.

"My best wishes, my boy. God bless you!"

Paul went back to Red Towers, and walked restlessly about for another hour in the moonlight. He felt as if he must go to Woolsborough to-morrow; it seemed very hard of Mrs. Percival to put him off for a week. It was easier to live without Celia in Switzerland than here, with only a few hours' railway between them.

The owls in the wood seemed very restless, too; they hooted diamally now and then, as if to condole with their young Squire on the cruelty of circumstances.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER II. A DECLARATION.

FOUR or five years after Hugh's departure, May's governess married, and was succeeded by a young lady of her mother's choosing. Miss Pim's chief recommendation in the eyes of Mrs. Beresford was her coming direct from a baronet's family. For the rest, Miss Pim was the merest portress at the Gate of Knowledge, who never entered herself the door she opened for others. She could translate coherently French and German words into English words, but they passed through her brain without leaving a trace of the ideas they expressed behind them. She was, in fact, an even exceptionally mechanical specimen of the host of teachers of both sexes, who resemble nothing so much as the money-changer at Charing Cross, who spends the day exchanging foreign money into English and English into foreign, accurately and honestly, without purchasing anything with the coin which passes and repasses through his hands continually. It must be said, however, in Miss Pim's defence, that she regarded governessing as a mere "point d'appui" for matrimony. She sat very lightly and loosely to her work in her assurance of speedy promotion; and she had all the airy serenity and security of the bird in Victor Hugo's exquisite image:

*Soyons comme l'oiseau posé pour un instant
Sur des rameaux trop frêles;
Qui sent trembler la branche, mais qui chant pour-
tant,
Sachant qu'il a des ailes.*

Her head was as full of day-dreams, novels, and romantic matches, as that of

any other prude—for prude she was, of course. Having as a governess to be decorous, she overdid so unnatural a part, and would fain have brought up May in the straitest sect of social binding. But here the good Vicar, who, if he did not see through Miss Pim herself, saw at least through her system, counteracted her daily and wholesomely.

Con O'Neil, the old Irish gardener, on the other hand, saw through Miss Pim herself with a clearness probably due to that young lady's persistent efforts to convert him to Protestantism. As the current Curate happened to be Evangelical, Miss Pim became zealously anti-Catholic, and Con got the benefit of her zeal. Mr. Winslow, the Curate of that day, had communicated to her the shock he had himself received from the discovery that the Vicar of the parish had a Roman Catholic in his service; and Miss Pim had begged from the Curate tracts, to be administered to Con for his conversion. It was about as hopeful a task as to endeavour to convert a sheep into a goat by feeding it on ivy.

"I hear you're a Roman Catholic, O'Neil?" she began, in the manner of a magistrate administering a caution to a criminal not to criminate himself.

"Me, miss! I'm a gardener, miss; that's what I am," Con replied dourly, to suggest that this was the sole relation in which he stood to Miss Pim, or with which she had anything whatever to do. In extenuation of the temper Con displayed in the interview we are recording, two things should be remembered. In the first place, all attempts at proselytism were associated in his mind with what is known in Ireland as "superism"—that is a base and abominable system of making "conversion" a condition of relief in cases of desperate destitution.

And, in the next place, Con resented Miss Pim's persistent attempts to prevent May's usual daily chat with him. Ever since she could talk and toddle, May had bullied Con abjectly, in the loving way in which we bully a pet dog; and indeed Con had all a dog's devotion to her. The chief pleasure of his day was a talk with the child, and this Miss Pim was bent on preventing, as nothing was more vulgarising than talking with servants or low people. How amazed Miss Pim would have been to hear that she was herself an incomparably more vulgar-minded person than Con!

As Miss Pim was not the sort of person to take the hint that Con to her was "a gardener" and nothing more, she explained condescendingly, "I meant about your religion, O'Neil."

"And what about it, miss?" Con asked, striking his spade into the ground with the defiance of a challenge and looking up at her doggedly with his hands on the handle and his chin on his hands.

"I was asking you only what it was," Miss Pim replied indignantly.

"Heaven knows what it is," answered Con equivocally, leaving her to infer, either that it was a matter of small account, or that it was a matter of account only to Heaven.

"But you are a Roman Catholic?" reiterated Miss Pim with wooden persistence.

"I'm what my father afore me was, and what my childhre will be afther me, like yourself, miss—barrin' the childhre." Con thus corrected himself with an emphasis that left in no doubt his assurance that Miss Pim would die an old maid.

This hint Miss Pim ignored, and replied only to his suggestion that one's religion was a mere matter of the accident of one's birth. "We should think for ourselves."

"It's little harrum that 'll do ye, miss."

"But it's not thinking for yourself to take your religion from—from others," cried Miss Pim, fearing to say "from your priest."

"I'd not be for takin' it from thim that hasn't much of it to spare, anyway," retorted Con, adding, as though it were an after-thought, "an' more betoken, it's thim that's always for thrustin' it on ye."

"If you mean me —"

"Ah, thin, miss, how could it be you I wor manin', whin divil a wan o' me knows what religion ye're of at all, at all. I hadn't the bad manners to ax ye?"

Miss Pim had so little idea of this being a rebuke that she took it for an apology.

"I belong to the Church of England, and, of course, as a Roman Catholic, you'll think me a heretic."

"I beg your pardin', miss, but who told ye I wor a Catholic?"

"But you are, aren't you?" cried she in amazement.

"Ax the master, miss, an' I'll go bail he'll tell ye what I tould ye meself—that I am a gardener," Con replied doggedly; and then he proceeded to do his work as though Miss Pim were non-existent.

At last it dawned on her that Con hereby intimated the impertinence of her catechism. If the Vicar considered Con's religion no concern of his, how much more should she refrain from any interference therewith? To the Vicar he was a gardener only, and he might well, therefore, be a gardener only to her. It took her some little time to understand this, yet even then she returned with the doggedness of dulness to the charge.

"But you have time when your work is done, O'Neil, to think of more important things than gardening?"

"But it's gardenin' I've got to do now, miss," replied Con, too vehemently busy to look up even.

"Of course; but when you've done, I mean, you might, perhaps, read some of these tracts at home," she said nervously, producing a batch of tracts on the Romish controversy from her reticule.

Con, thinking her incorrigible, worked on furiously in silence.

Taking his silence for assent, however sullen, she added, "I shall leave them here on your coat, O'Neil, so that you mayn't forget them." Then, having sown this handful of the good seed on the hopeful soil of Con's coat, which lay on a seat near him, she tripped triumphantly away.

Con straightened himself, took his handkerchief from his hat to mop his forehead, looking after her the while and muttering "thracks" over and over in a tone of withering scorn. Then, throwing his handkerchief violently into his caubeen, and clapping that upon his head impatiently, he took out his pipe from his waistcoat pocket in order to solace with a smoke his outraged feelings. Having chopped a bit off his Limerick twist, minced it, rubbed it well between his hands and filled therewith his pipe, he lit it, flung away the match, and said between the first violent sucks and puffs necessary to get it going:

"Begorra—she'd—ould—a match—to

show—the sun—his coorse—she would—so!"

Upon this idea of the arrogance of the proselytising Protestant, as represented by Miss Pim, he mused whilst he smoked, with the result that, when his pipe was done, he took "the thracks," tore them to thread-papers and used them, tied to string, for frightening away the birds from some seed he had sown.

While he was in complacent contemplation of this good work, and muttering to himself with a grin—"I've converted him, anyway"—May joined him. The child spent much of her pocket money, when her brother Fred was not at home to absorb it all, in buying Con, of all things, Limerick twist!

Now ordinary tobacco is to this fearful drug "as moonlight is to sunlight, and as water is to wine," and May had all a smuggler's anxiety to undergo in buying this contraband article from the amazed village shopkeeper and in conveying it as swiftly as possible—that her hand or frock might not be drenched with the stench thereof—to her beneficiary, Con. Con had had to give up long ago all attempts to dissuade her from making him so contraband and compromising a present, since May had discovered that a pipe of Limerick twist was the greatest pleasure of his life. He took it now always with much demonstration of delight, and repaid her indirectly, not only by working overtime in her special garden, but by stocking it with the choicest of her favourite flowers, which, he assured her, were given him by a friend in Leeds, though, as often as not, he had to buy them.

"Top of the mornin' to you, Miss May."

"I've brought you some tobacco, Con. Do have a smoke."

"Heaven bless ye, miss. It's just the wan thing I was sick for this moment; think of that now!" cried the rascal, taking out the pipe still hot from his last smoke. "Thank ye kindly, Miss May," he said as he took from her hand the tobacco.

He chopped a bit off, and minced it fine very deliberately, and took an unusual time to fill and light his pipe; for he was revolving in his mind some effective way of preventing the child from making him any more such presents, not only because he had much rather she spent her little allowance on herself, but also because he foresaw Miss Pim's inevitable dis-

covery, some time or other, of May's contraband trade, and the inevitable prohibition thereafter of all intercourse between him and the child.

When he had at last got the pipe to draw, he puffed out a vast volume of smoke, heaved a heavy sigh, and said as he scratched his head:

"Ah, begor! That's the lasht bit o' baccy you'll smoke, Con, for long enough—long enough."

"Why, Con?"

"It's the heartt, Miss May," he replied, placing his hand where he supposed that organ to be: a little above his left hip. "You s ee, miss, the smoke sets the heartt flutherin' like a burrd in a cherry net; an' the doother, he says to me—Dooth'er Doyle they call him—'O'Neil,' he says, 'it's smotherin' yere heartt wid smoke, ye are,' he says; 'that's what's the matther wid you,' he says."

"But I didn't know you were ill, Con," May cried in deep concern.

"Ah, it isn't what ye'd call ill, Miss May; only the heartt gets dhrowned in smoke, an' wallops about a bit thryin' to breathe; that's how it is, miss."

This did not sound reassuring.

"Oh, Con," she cried, in keen distress, "do give it up; do."

"Deed thin, Miss May, I must; but I can't shtand the sight of it, miss; an' I says to the doother, I says, 'there's Miss May, God bless her! will be bringin' me a bit, doother, an' I must smoke it, if I dhropped; I must so,' I says. 'To be sure,' he says, 'you can't refuse the likes of her,' he says; 'but sorra another ounce she'd bring you, if she knew it was gallopin' yere heartt to death; an' that's just what it's doin', O'Neil; an' I'm not goin' behind yere back to say it,' he says." This fine imaginative dialogue had an effect on May that Con had little reckoned 'on; for the child realised so vividly the danger he had lightly suggested that she burst into tears.

"Oh, Con!" she sobbed, "I'm so sorry. Throw it away, oh, do throw it away." And before he could answer she had taken the tobacco from him and flung it over the wall.

He was so much shocked and touched by her tears that he at once pitched the pipe after it.

"Yerra, Miss May ashore, whisht wid ye! Sure, nobody minds what Dooth'er Doyle says—not wan. It's always whistlin' for death, he is, if ye'd a pain in yere finger."

This picture of the doctor with death, like a dog, at his call, was hardly comforting to May.

"You don't feel like that now, Con, do you?" she asked with a wistful anxiety which was really as touching as it seemed to Con to be.

"I, miss? Not I, miss; I niver felt bether in my life. Sure I'm as strong as a horse, Miss May; and the docther, he says, 'O'Neil,' he says, 'if you give up smokin',' he says, 'your heartt'll go shteady as a clock,' he says, 'for fifty year an' better.'"

"Do give it up, Con."

"I will, miss; I will."

"And you oughtn't to work till you get well, Con. I'll ask papa to let you stay at home till you're better."

"Sure, that 'ud be the death of me intirely, Miss May," Con hastened to say in some trepidation. "It's work that keeps the blood goin', and the blood keeps the heartt goin', like a wather mill, miss."

Con's versatile physiology completely imposed upon May, who was of an age and of a character to accept implicitly everything a friend told her. Con's great strength and weakness was the amazing imaginative power and readiness of his invention of reasons for all he did and excuses for all he left undone, which usually were so plausible and ingenious as to impose even on the Vicar for the moment. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that Con's pleasure in invention was so keen, and his ethical estimate of truth so light, that he would prefer a false, but ingenious, reason or excuse to an equally adequate one which was true, but common-place. Candidly, Con was an incomparable and incorrigible liar, without being in the least degree mean, tricky, or cowardly. That a man should be a liar without these usual characteristics of a liar would, perhaps, be impossible in the case of a matter-of-fact Saxon; but in the case of an imaginative Celt, it is possible enough, and even common enough.

However, May's trust in Con was absolute, for it takes some time and many impositions to sap a child's trustfulness, and May was an unusually trustful child.

"Where is she, Miss May?" asked Con, to turn the conversation.

"Who, Con? Miss Pim? She's gone to visit her district," May answered, as she dried her eyes.

"I wish you'd ax the master, Miss May, to let her lave me out of her dishthric'.

She's been thryin' to make a souper of me all the mornin'!"

"A what, Con?"

"Wan of thim, miss, that sells their sowls for a sup o' soup—an' it's a small sowl ye'll buy for that, I'm thinkin'!"

As May's only idea of such a transaction was derived from "The Bottle Imp," a gruesome German story that made her flesh creep, she could merely look her amazement.

"She's been givin' me thracks, miss, to convert me," Con added in explanation.

"Oh!"

"You're a Catholic, O'Neil?" says she. "I am, thank God," says I. "It's little you've got to be thankful for," says she. "There's thim that has less," says I. "Manin' me?" says she. "You, miss!" says I. "Sure it's the other way wid you," says I. "How's that, O'Neil?" says she. "You've so much religion that ye're givin' it away, miss," says I, pintin' wid the rake to the thracks. "They're for you," says she. "I wouldn't rob ye, miss," says I. "Oh, they cost nothing," says she. "They're worth it," says I. "They'll do you no harm anyway," says she. "I'll be bound they won't," says I. "Thin you'll read 'em?" says she, haudin' thim to me. "Thank ye kindly, miss," says I, "I'll make good use of 'em," says I. "And so I did, Miss May, for there they are!" pointing with a grin to the fluttering fragments of the tracts strung on string.

May having digested this voracious version of Con's interview with Miss Pim, naturally took a schoolroom view of it.

"Oh, but, Con, she'll question you on them!"

"Ab, thin, Miss May, 'tisn't my governess she is?" This being just the sort of idea that would strike a child as irresistibly droll, May laughed delightedly. "Faix it's canin' me she'll be nexsht," added Con lugubriously, to keep the joke up, for nothing pleased him more than to make May laugh.

"No; she'll put you in the corner, Con—in the water-barrel," she added in high delight, after looking round the garden for the corner best adapted for a penitentiary.

Into this childish fooling Con entered with the keenest zest, capping each suggestion of May's with something still more grotesque, till the thin jest was threshed threadbare.

"But really, Con, you mustn't mind about the tracts; for, now that she's got

a district, she'll be always out in the afternoon, and I can walk with papa, and talk to you, and climb the pear-tree, and everything."

"She'll not hould an, Miss May," Con prophesied dismally, with a shake of the head; "she isn't that sort."

"Oh, but she will; I'm sure she will. She promised Mr. Winslow she would take it for a year."

"Oh!" cried Con in a tone which expressed that light had broken in upon him, and then he muttered to himself compassionately, "Ah, thin, Heaven help the poor young man that daren't say 'No' to her!" thereby, with one blow, striking at Miss Pim's frowardness and Mr. Winslow's sheepishness, which must result in his being led by her, eventually and inevitably, to the altar.

"Con!"

"Yes, Miss May."

"You mustn't mind if I don't come to see you every day."

"Of coorse not, miss; there's your lessons to larn."

"It isn't that, Con; but guess who's coming."

"Master Fred?"

"Hugh; Con! Mr. Grey!"

"Misther Hugh! More power to him! Ah thin, Miss May, didn't I tell you he'd come back to you, like a swallow to the summer? I did so."

"He's coming to stay a week, Con."

"He'll shtop more nor a week, miss, I'll be bound."

"But he has only a month to stay in England, altogether."

"Arrah, Miss May, what in the worruld brings him to Amerikey, wid land of his own at home?" asked Con, taking a thoroughly Irish view of emigration, as only the desperate resort of the evicted victims of landlordism.

"He goes to seek adventures, Con," May replied in a superior and almost reproving tone; for she delighted in and devoured stories of adventure, and retailed them sometimes to Con.

"Adventures is right enough in a shtory, but, bedad, there's could comfort in 'em in arnest. I like lishtenin' to a shtorm in bed, miss; but I'd be long sorry to go to say to hear it; I would so."

"Mr. Hugh is different," May replied superfly.

"Different from the likes of me, miss! Sure there isn't the like of Mr. Hugh in the country!"

"Oh Con! I'm so glad he's coming! Do you think he'll remember me?"

"Remember ye, miss! 'Con,' says he to me the day before he wint away, 'Con,' says he, 'you'll look afther Miss May's rabbits an' guinea-pigs,' says he, 'an' give 'em green shtuff, an' keep 'em clean an' tidy,' says he. 'Yerra, Misther Hugh,' says I, 'sorra a bit of heartt she'll have for 'em when you're gone.' 'Ah Con!' he says wid a sigh, he says, 'childhres' heartts is like them slips,' he says, 'asy transplanted; they've no roots like ould folka,' he says, as if he was as ould as an oak. 'It isn't so ould ye are yourself, Misther Hugh,' says I, laughin' at him, for many's the rise he tuk out of me; but there washn't a wink of a laugh in him whin he answered, 'I'm ould enough to know my own mind an' heartt, Con,' he says, 'an' 'tis rooted she is in 'em,' he says; 'an' the deeper she'll grow in 'em every year,' he says."

Certainly no one, from internal evidence, would have considered this highly figurative and effusive speech to be Hugh's; but, probably, Con, like Thucydides, considered that an historian had the picturesque right to clothe his hero's known sentiments in dramatic and rhetorical speeches. Anyway, Con's rhetoric was effective, for of course May believed in the literal accuracy of the conversation thus reported.

"How could he think that I should forget him?" she cried, with flushed face and the tears in her eyes; "I could never forget him, not if I lived till I was ever, ever so old."

"Misther Hugh, do you mane, miss?" asked Con with such seeming stupidity that May looked at him in surprise.

"Yes."

"Bedad, miss, I thought you'd forgotten him by this."

May stared up at him in perplexity, for Hugh was an ever-recurring subject of conversation between them.

"I mane, miss, that you didn't think as much of him as you used to do——"

"I think more of him," she answered with almost indignant earnestness, and then added, with all the impressiveness of retrospective old age: "I was only a child then, and never thought how kind, and good, and generous — there never was anyone so good. Oh, Con! I wonder will he be like that still?"

"Deed then, miss, you must ax himself," answered Con, grinning up at someone behind her.

May turned round to find herself face to face with Hugh — big, brown-bearded, but Hugh still, in right of his large, soft brown eyes—brighter through the sudden moisture that had sprung to them—and his frank smile.

"Oh, Hugh!" she cried as he took her up in his arms and kissed her.

"I have been wondering the same thing about you for a month or more, 'Will she be like that still?' And you are, and you aren't," he said, holding her from him, to take a critical survey of her happy face.

Con, seeing him at the corner of the small conservatory, had made signs of silence to him, over May's unconscious head, so that Hugh had heard her whole declaration from "I could never forget him."

THE OUTCASTS' HAVENS.

ALL waifs and strays from the streets, picked up here and there and brought in—now by a policeman; now by some stray Samaritan; or perhaps by pitying householder, whose door-step has served as a couch for the poor little wanderer; but here they are in harbour anyhow: boys on one side, girls on the other; each with a great bowl of hot tea to the front, flanked with an equally satisfactory trencher of bread and butter. Yes, it is tea-time at the Outcasts' Haven; the great bell has rung, and the clatter of hundreds of hob-nailed boots on the wooden stairs has resounded through the lofty building, and here is the ship's company all present, a poor, shipwrecked crew indeed, and only just saved from the cruel raging sea.

From all parts of the country come the waifs and strays. They have drifted up to London by various ways and from many quarters, to cluster around the stony-hearted stepmother; but the greater part are no doubt London-born. Some have never had a home, however wretched. Brought into the world in a workhouse, or perhaps a common lodging-house, and knowing no other shelter during their short lives, with the street as nursery and school. Others again have been carefully reared for a time, have had careful, industrious mothers, and honest, hard-working fathers. But mother died, and father took to drink. All was lost for the little family; turned into the streets, they drifted hither and thither; but one saved out of the number and brought to the Haven at last.

The Havens for Outcasts are at Limehouse, not far from the Docks, and are surrounded by a poor and struggling population; but they are not designed especially for the benefit of Limehouse, but for all London round, wherever its lights may twinkle, and wherever boys and girls may be cast away upon its streets. It has happened that the trade of Limehouse has declined of late years, and here was a roomy warehouse to let, which was secured by the head of the London Cottage Mission and skilfully adapted to its present purpose: as a home for the homeless, that is, and a refuge for poor children neglected by all the rest of the world.

An outside view shows a square substantial building, standing cornerwise between Dod Street and the Burdett Road—that long, level Burdett Road, which, passing by wharves, canals, warehouses, and slums, unites the river-side districts with the more inland regions of Mile End and Bow. Being at the Limehouse end of the Burdett Road, there is a breezy kind of feeling in the air, and the gusts of wind and rain fall upon us as if fresh from the tarry cordage of ships and barges.

The doors of the Haven stand wide open for all homeless little ones, but in a metaphorical and not a literal sense. Actually, the entrance is through a well-secured door, which, with its little wicket for scrutinising visitors, reminds one somewhat of a convent door. But there is not conventual stillness within. Indeed, there is something of an uproar: shrill, childish voices, and yet not quite childlike voices; shriller laughter and cries of glee, which still are not altogether mirthful. It is the children's play-hour, and the little girls in their play-room are jumping and romping about—not without need of being helped and encouraged a little; for, sooth to say, the notion of play seems altogether strange to many of these little creatures, and there is a sudden galvanic movement about them, as if the springs of joy and laughter in their frames had grown rusty and out of use.

But we must begin at the beginning. How is the little waif, cold, wet, and hungry, with only the hard stones for a bed, to gain admission? Well, here is the first rule of admission—tidings of joy, surely to all who have hearts to feel for the little ones:

"Any outcast boy or girl, up to the age of sixteen, without parents, guardians, or friends, and who has no home or bed but

the streets, will be admitted at once, at any hour of the day or night free, and be provided with a bath, warm clothes, food, and a bed."

And to aid in the work of rescue, cards are distributed among the police containing the address of the Outcasts' Havens, and the necessary blanks for particulars of the case; that is, name, age, and where found. But, indeed, anyone finding a child in this sad condition, may bring or send it to the Haven, the address of which should thus be carefully noted, as 1A, Dod Street, and 311 and 313, Burdett Road, Limehouse, London, E. The place is well known now among the force, and the policeman on his beat who finds some poor outcast shrinking from the flash of his lantern, is no longer compelled to hopelessly bid it move on, but knows exactly where to send it for warmth, shelter, and kindly care.

Here then a light is always burning, a beacon light in the wilderness of misery and despair; here a door is always ready to be opened; at the cry of real distress all is prepared for the reception of the unknown guests. Tanks of hot water heat the building and afford a warm bath at any moment. The outcast child is washed and purified, its rags are taken away to be disinfected and desiccated; it is clothed, fed, and put to bed, apart from the rest, till the doctor's fiat pronounces it free from infectious disorders, and permits it to share in the daily life of the Havens.

And so the basement of this great pile of buildings is devoted to the general machinery of warming, cooking, cleaning; to baths and washhouses; to lockers, where the scanty belongings of the inmates, a few shapeless rags for the most part, are numbered and put away. Then there are store-rooms full of clothing. Each girl has, in addition to all necessary underclothing, a new warm frock of blue serge, a warm ulster for out of doors, a waterproof hat. The boys, too, wear a neat uniform of blue serge, and some of them assume quite a smart and military bearing.

Then there are three floors above, containing spacious and airy rooms—play-room, dining hall, dormitories, one over the other; the girls' part being, of course, quite distinct from the boys', although they assemble in the same room for meals and prayers. The daily life is varied and active enough. All of the proper age are sent to the neighbouring Board Schools; there are workshops close by where shoe-making and tailoring are done; with wood-

chopping and other light labours. Some of the boys have been placed in offices and warehouses as office boys and messengers, coming back to the Haven every night.

All kinds of strange little beings are brought to light in the draught of this great net. Sometimes it is a runaway who has really a home if he chose to go to it, and he is quickly packed off to his anxious relatives; but a large proportion of the little waifs have absolutely nobody belonging to them, and in this refuge have, for the first time, learnt that the words father and mother had any significance, as implying fatherly care or motherly love.

Here is one little fellow, brown and dark-eyed, who cannot speak a word of English—he is a Breton boy, and has, perhaps, some sorrowful story concealed in his impassive bearing. Many of the children were found in Trafalgar Square, and were rescued by Mr. Austin from the terrible scenes of want and misery which were witnessed on the bleak wet nights, when hundreds of the destitute were lying crouched on the cold wet stones. Some of the children had enjoyed no other home for weeks and months. There stands a child whose mother was found sitting upon the stones exposed to all the rain and wind with only one ragged skirt for clothing, beneath which clustered her half-naked babes seeking such warmth as her poor chilled frame could give. Even now, all comfortably clothed and sheltered, the little outcasts bear upon their pallid faces the traces of those long nights of misery and privation. These Trafalgar Square boys (and girls, however, seem to feel a kind of pride of origin, and, indeed, the circumstances of their rescue have a flavour of adventure about them. It was Mr. Austin who drove up among the outcasts with a waggonette loaded with bread for their relief, and who then filled the vehicle with the children who came within his scope.

The story of many of the lads is simple enough: mother died, and father went away. Sometimes there is actual desertion by the parents, and, in other cases, early orphanage. The last resource of the boys is selling matches; they earn threepence or fourpence a day perhaps, enough for food but not for lodgings, and thus the street is the nightly refuge. A casual job brings in sometimes sixpence or even eightpence, and then the lad enjoys the luxuries of the fourpenny kip, or lodging-house for the night, to turn out on the streets again

next day. Other boys come from the country. Here is one, a nice bright-looking lad, smart enough in his blue uniform, who shall tell his own tale.

"I'm fro' Mansfield in Yorkshire. Oh, yes, I had a comfortable home, only father and mother died, and we went to live with granny. Oh, she wasn't that bad off." A pardonable gleam of family pride lights up the boy's face. "She'd a gaarden and two pigs; she's got my little brother now; but, says I, I'll shift for mysen. And I went off and sold things about the country, Lincoln, Nottingham, and most everywhere. Then I comes to London, thinking I should do fine, and then I lost my trading money and got into trouble. First of all it was two 'tators. Me and another boy, we cut a hole in a sack and took two 'tators: and that was seven days. And then I came out barefooted and I took a pair o' boots. That was three months; and then I got a fortnight for begging. And arter that I went in the Square—Trafalgar Square, and then you fetched me away, Mr. Austin, you know."

A likely boy is this, with all his wits about him and with plenty of good in him, in spite of his troubles. He is in an office now, and his master knows all about the boots, and has no misgivings as to the safety of his own. And yet, but for the helping hand at the right moment, this boy would have probably gone to swell the criminal population; and, from the lowest point of view, would probably have cost the country a heavy score in the future.

But if the condition of the lost, homeless boy is lamentable enough, what must be said for the girls—exposed to every kind of contamination, and yet retaining the capacity of suffering, and a painful consciousness of degradation? And the stories belonging to the girls, of which many cannot be fully told, are enough to wring the heart, and bring tears to the eyes of those most unaccustomed to the melting mood. Here is a girl with a soft delicate face, which might, under other circumstances, have been full of refinement and charm, a girl of fourteen years or so, who was found hiding herself from the light of day in some half-ruined outhouse. Clothing had she none, except an old newspaper wrapped about her loins. Want and privation had reduced the girl almost to a skeleton; and for many days she could only partake of nourishment in small and repeated doses. Questioned about those former evil days, she can only reply in sentences interrupted

by choking sobs. It is as if she had fled from some inexpressible cruelty and degradation, which it breaks her heart to recall. But she is safe now and in good hands, and the oil of loving-kindness is poured upon her wounds.

Here is a more cheerful witness. A nice bright-eyed Irish lassie this—Irish in blood that is, for she has not had a chance of picking up the brogue. "Please, sir—Father was a soldier once, in the Third Buffs, and got his discharge; and then he was a postman in the County of Kent. But he got paralysed, did father, and could not work, and mother started to go back to Ireland, and we walked and walked, and came to London, and here mother left me." The remembrance of it brings a burst of irrepressible tears. Here the matron corroborates the story; she remembers the poor mother and the little tribe of children with bare and bleeding feet, and how tearfully thankful she was to leave this one little maid in safe hands. "And mother had written—oh, yes, she had written from the workhouse in Liverpool—in the workhouse after walking two hundred miles"—and here the child could not help crying again, for the soldier's little daughter had her feelings, mark you!—and somehow it seemed hard.

And this little story reminds us of another excellent feature of the Havens, as to which we may quote the public notices that are posted all about. "Any parents with large families who have homes destitute of furniture, or who have no home at all for their little ones, can, on applying, after a few simple formalities, have their children lodged and fed for a limited time, on payment of one penny per night for each child, or in exceptional cases, free of all charge whatsoever." It may here be noted that nearly all the cases prove to be exceptional, and that there is no great flow of pennies into the coffers of the Havens.

Still another regulation of the Havens deserves mention, quoting again from the same public notice. "Any mother during her confinement, having no means of supporting or attending to her little ones, can have her children lodged and fed for the time being," on the same favourable terms that is, for the nominal penny a night, which is designed rather to save the applicants from the feeling of being pauperised, than with the expectation of raising a revenue from such a source.

The advantage, to a poor and crowded

neighbourhood, of such offers as these, is abundantly evident. The poor are helped in their most pressing straits, and are left free to struggle for the means of livelihood, while the family can be at once reconstituted, when the immediate pressure is over. Far different is the parochial system of relief under the Poor Laws, when the home must be broken up, and the bread-winners, as well as the helpless ones, incarcerated in a gloomy workhouse. Indeed, it strikes us very strongly that in this matter it is the nation and its legislators which have gone hopelessly astray, and that our hard-working friends in the East have got hold of the right clue, and are truly showing the way out of this terrible labyrinth of misery and woe.

And now what could be in greater contrast with the wet sloppy streets outside, and the miserable couch of stone that awaited the homeless boy or girl, than the warm, well-lighted and ventilated dormitories, with their rows of cosy beds, all ready for their occupants, with their white sheets and bright rugs, and soft pillows, inviting sleep? The wind may howl and the rain patter against the windows; all the more the children may hug themselves that no longer they are exposed to the cold blast and biting rain, with the prospect of a doorstep for a pillow. Some of the little fellows have been put to bed already, not ill, only wearied and exhausted with hardships undergone, little pallid faces, and bright questioning eyes shining from the pillows, but not fretful or complaining, but rather penetrated with a sense of comfort and peace.

Another glimpse is of a lighted dormitory with rows upon rows of neat white beds, but all now tenanted with the tiniest of little girls. The raising of the gaslight raises from the pillows half-a-hundred little heads, not asleep yet or even pretending to be, but calling out in childish glee at the unexpected light and the sight of well-known faces. There are curly heads and lint-white locks, and faces dark and lank; but all seem happy and content, and raise their voices in shrill greeting. Then at a sign from the matron, they are all silent, the light is extinguished, and they are left to their slumbers.

And surely for the sake of a common humanity, these little waifs and strays will find friends and protectors all over the land. There is no possibility, surely, that the work of rescuing the little ones will be left to languish for want of necessary funds.

There can be no question as to the beneficence of the work; the Havens are not surrounded by a costly staff, like our workhouses and prisons. Whatever we contribute to their support, goes directly to the benefit of the little ones. The cost of the maintenance of each child may be put down roughly at five shillings a week, or thirteen pounds a year—add three pounds a year for necessary clothing, and it will be seen at what cost a human soul may be rescued from misery and degradation.

NOT PROFESSIONAL.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

THE summer was long and hot. Dr. Walter found it was as much as he could do to get every day's work well done in the heat and lack of energy which was the result of it. Two or three difficult cases, which he could not leave to anyone else, kept him in town long after the time when he had hoped to get away. He grew very tired, and there was, it seemed to him for the first time, a loneliness and emptiness in his life. He grew to hate the evenings which he spent, chiefly sitting thinking in his room, in the long summer twilight, which is often, when spent in solitude, far more depressing than the gloomiest day in winter; and when at last, late in August, he found himself able to get away, and obliged to decide definitely where to go, he thought he would claim a long-standing invitation given him by some cousins to come to them when he could, and for as long as he liked. He went down to their home in Wiltshire on a Saturday evening, and got out of the train at the pretty little country-station, wondering whether anyone would meet him, and how he should get his luggage taken from the station to his cousin's house, which was, as far as he remembered, about three miles away. He had not more than an instant to wait in uncertainty. Two girls at whom he had looked as the train came in, but without recognising them, came quickly up to him.

"Cousin Tom, this is you, I suppose. It is so long since we met, you know, you must forgive me for having forgotten you—Frank is outside with the carriage. We came in to find you, as he could not leave the horse. This is Kitty, as you will have guessed."

Dr. Walter turned from his elder cousin, in whose bright face he began to recognise the same he had known as much rounder

and more childishly pretty, to the younger and shorter of the two, who was a curious contrast to her sister. She was dark, very dark, with bright, really black eyes, which seemed the centre of the rather coquettish expression of her whole face. Dr. Walter took the hand she gave him, saying smilingly: "Yes, I should have guessed, that's just it. I shouldn't have known, you are both so altered."

"Of course, Tom," said Madge Carlton laughing. "Why, I'm rapidly becoming an old woman. These years haven't altered you so much as I thought at first, though. Is that your portmanteau? Will you make the man bring it to the carriage? Frank will be wondering where we are. Oh, thank you"—as he picked up a red sunshade which fell suddenly—"that is Kitty's. You careless girl, you will lose your belongings some day."

"Very likely," said Kitty nonchalantly, as she took the sunshade from Dr. Walter and thanked him, as it seemed to him, a little carelessly.

They found their brother outside. There was no renewal of acquaintance to be made between him and his cousin, for Frank Carlton was in London at rather frequent intervals, and rarely failed to do what he called "look up" Dr. Walter. Half-an-hour's drive brought them to the pretty, old, red-brick house, covered on one side with roses; white roses which flowered nearly all the summer. Inside the rooms looked cool, hot though the afternoon had been—really rooms to rest in Dr. Walter found them, not dusty, and full of concentrated hot air like those he had gladly left to his housekeeper's care that morning. And it was evident that his cousins meant that he should rest, and enjoy himself.

Over the tea, which was carried out into the garden, Madge Carlton suggested many plans for the next week, which met with a ready assent from her brother and Kitty. The three had lost their father and mother very early, and the two girls had lived with their brother ever since they had grown up. The next day was Sunday, and in the evening they all strolled across the fields to a tiny village church. They had not gone far on their way back, when they found that Kitty was not, in her usual fashion, slowly coming behind them, making fun of the odds and ends of conversation she could catch. Madge wanted to go back and look for her, but Frank, saying with an irritated tone in his voice, "She'll

turn up, and escorted all right, don't be afraid," made them come home.

They were standing in the drawing-room waiting for supper before Kitty was to be seen in the garden dragging down with her sunshade bits of the climbing roses over the summer-house, while a boy—only the name would have hurt his feelings—gathered them for her. Five minutes later she slipped into her place beside Frank at the supper table, with one of the roses in her dress. The mischievous smile with which she looked up into his face was her only answer to Frank when he said:

"Kitty, you are late again. Was that one of the Vicarage pupils in the garden? I will not have them hanging about like that. You are not to let them walk home with you, unless you make them come into supper reasonably."

After supper, Frank and his cousin went in to the garden to smoke. It was quite dark outside, and the light in the hall made Kitty's figure stand out brilliantly as she stood on the steps under the lamp in one of the red dresses she almost always wore. Wonderfully pretty she looked, with the light on her little piquante brown face, as she called:

"Where are you and Tom, Frank? I'm coming to you for a cigarette, I think."

She came to Dr. Walter's side, and walked up and down with them. The grass grew slippery with dew. Kitty's thin shoes prevented her having a very steady footing, and when Dr. Walter offered his arm she took it laughingly, and every time they came to the end of the walk turned so determinedly back for another turn that Madge at last called to them from the drawing-room window in desperation, to know when they were coming in.

It was too hot on Monday to do anything but sit in the garden with books; much too hot, Kitty declared, to make a call, to pay which, Madge finally had to set out alone.

"Much too sedate and prim for me the Wilsons are," she confided to Dr. Walter. "I never can be sedate, you know."

Dr. Walter laughed, and looked at the little figure beside him, swinging in a hammock in anything but a sedate attitude, with a look not unmixed with admiration.

"They are just Madge's sort of girls," she went on: "very sensible, very good, and——"

"Well, what more do you want?" said Dr. Walter.

Kitty gave one of those smiles that gave her face a look for which bewitching is the only term.

"Oh, you can answer that for yourself to-morrow. They will go with us for the water picnic, and you can study them all day and tell me."

Dr. Walter did not have much chance or much time, however, to study anyone but Kitty during the long day which they spent either on the river or lounging on the banks. He found none of it so pleasant as the hour he spent lying on the grass smoking, under a tree, with Kitty sitting on one of its very lowest branches tormentingly throwing at him bits of stick and anything else she could find.

He returned them at intervals, when he felt energetic enough; and Kitty's face, as she laughingly and skilfully defended herself with her hat, and threw more at him "to teach him to aim better," was fascinating enough to make him fail to realise how late it was growing. The damp grass, and the fact that the voices of the others began to sound far away, made him suddenly jump up with an exclamation at the lateness of the hour, to which Kitty answered:

"Oh, didn't you know that? I did. Madge called us a quarter of an hour ago; but I thought it wasn't good for her to have what she wanted so quickly, and I didn't answer. They've only walked on to the inn, you know, for the carriages. Come along, we shall be comfortably in time to get into one of them, which is the great thing," and she slipped her hand into his arm as they walked up the bank leading into the dark plantation.

Dr. Walter took the little brown hand and drew it farther into his arm. He was beginning to feel "Kitty's ways," as her friends called them, very fascinating.

The days slipped away so quickly and so pleasantly for Dr. Walter, that the end of a fortnight found him most unwilling even to think that he must soon go back to his work. But by way of making himself realise that it must be so, he said one morning at breakfast that he ought to be back with his patients again.

Frank and Madge remonstrated, of course, and Kitty struck in hastily:

"Well, Frank, you must let us give that dance you promised, and then, Tom, you must stay for it, and that will be a little longer."

Dr. Walter lifted his eyes to meet Kitty's across the table, looking at him from

under her dark lashes with what seemed to him a very entreating glance. He liked dancing, and the thought of watching Kitty's thorough enjoyment was decidedly attractive. He could not resist it, so he said:

"Well, since you are determined to make me hopelessly idle and dissipated, I must give in. I can arrange for a few more days."

"Well, Madge, to-morrow week. Will that do, do you think?" cried Kitty, her eager face looking prettier than ever as she leaned on the table, playing with the sugar-tongs. "If you don't seize the opportunity, Frank will change his mind and say we can't have it. Frank,"—turning to him hastily—"who will you ask down here for it? Any of the men we had in the winter? Mind they're men who can dance—who won't want to shoot all day and pretend they're tired in the evening."

"Well, I'll promise you they shall be useful as well as ornamental, Kitty," said Frank. "Madge, I suppose you could find room for four?"

"Yes, certainly. Who will you ask?"

"Well, Marsham Brown certainly, and perhaps, Jack and Charlie Graham: you'll see to the people about here; if we must we must, and you'll make it go all right;" with a smiling, confident look at his elder sister, on whose powers of arrangement he knew he might depend. So to Kitty's enthusiastic delight, which she showed by hanging round Frank's neck till he laughingly shook her off, it was settled.

Frank's guests arrived on the evening before the dance. The one of whom he had spoken—Mr. Marsham Brown—had stayed with them before, but not for some time.

Kitty announced at breakfast next day, that she should be far too busy to have any tennis or to "waste any time in the garden," as she put it.

Dr. Walter looked, what he felt, disappointed, but he determined to spend the day in a walk to a ruin near, which he had long wished to see.

It was a lovely early-autumn day, with that curious, heavy stillness over everything which is, after a little while, almost saddening.

The wonder which came to Dr. Walter about the middle of the day, as to what the lively household he had left behind were likely to be doing, was followed by a sigh, when he thought of the life to which he must so soon go back. The weary

sense of loneliness which had weighed on him before he left town, and which he had hoped was the result of physical and mental fatigue, only came upon him now more strongly than ever. His work, of course, was there, and he told himself that it was and must be quite enough for him. But to-day there seemed a sort of background of dreariness—dreary evenings and mornings—the thought of which he did not like to face; and for the first time, rather to his own surprise, it struck him that a wife might make everything very different for him. With the thought of a lady's presence in those dark dusty rooms of his, suddenly Kitty's bright ways and looks came before him. He wondered if she could alter his lonely life for him; if, were he to ask her, she would bring into his life, which seemed to him to-day terribly empty and dull, that indefinable something which it wanted.

He went on and on, forgetting the object of his walk altogether—all his thoughts were taken up with this new idea which had come to him. Finally he thought he would try to find out, perhaps that evening, if Kitty were really able to do all this for him.

It was late when he got in. Madge was in the drawing-room, and gave him tea before he went up to dress. When he came down again an hour later, it had grown nearly dark, and coming out of the dim passage he could not see when he first pushed aside the curtain over the doorway who was in the drawing-room, only one end of which was as yet lighted. In another moment he saw under the lamp Kitty, dressed, with a garnet necklace round her pretty neck, which caught the light in flashes as she moved. Mr. Marsham Brown was standing beside her, an empty box in his hand. Her pretty head was bent over the white flowers she was fastening carefully into the front of her dress. Neither of them saw Dr. Walter, and the strong sweet scent of the violets came to him at the same moment as he heard Kitty say:

"Violets, too, which no one else will have—I don't know how to thank you—you know how I like them—from you."

She lowered her voice to say the last few words, and looked up into the face of the man who gazed so admiringly at her, with a look that evidently meant much to him. Dr. Walter turned abruptly from where he stood just inside the doorway, and went straight out through the open hall door into the darkest of the garden paths.

He no longer saw Kitty or the drawing-room; the scent of the flowers had brought back to him another room, and another woman with white violets in her dress—a woman whom he suddenly longed to see with an overpowering longing. How had he been so foolish, such an idiot? Love Kitty! marry Kitty! Why had he not known all these months what he knew with sudden certainty now, that Mary Chaston's love was the only thing that could fill up the want in his life? He felt all at once as if it was impossible to get through the hours which must pass before he could tell her so—for tell her he must, whatever she said in answer.

Up and down the grass he walked, and when he went in to meet Frank's inquiries as to "what in the world he had been doing to make him so late?" he had to put some force on himself to make his answer coherent, and his conversation to the girls he danced with either sensible or amusing.

He made one of the letters which he found when he came down the next day, an excuse for leaving his cousins that afternoon, in spite of their remonstrances.

Yet, when he reached home, a feeling, that he could not define, made him wait till nearly the evening of the day after, before he went to her. He walked slowly towards her house, though he would not let himself think of what he would say; he wanted what she had to give too much to think how he would ask for it. He went up into the same room in which he had seen her before, and waited a moment or two before Mary Chaston came to him. She had only just come in and was wearing her hat still. Rather surprised he fancied she looked, but she only apologised for keeping him waiting and said smilingly: "Did you like that book I lent you? You never told me when you sent it back. Are you come to prove you did by letting me lend you another of his?"

"No," he answered, "that isn't what I want." Something in his voice apparently prevented her from speaking lightly again; for saying quickly that it was very chilly and that she should indulge in a fire, she threw off her hat and, taking a matchbox from the mantel-shelf, knelt down and lit it herself.

Dr. Walter watched her firm hands for the moment she did it, and longed to take them into his own, but he waited till she rose and stood facing him, with one hand resting on the mantel-piece, to say:

"No. I have come to ask you a question

which I hardly know how to put into any words. You have shown me what life ought to be; will you come into mine and help me to live it? Will you love me?"

She had turned towards the fire at his first word—her fingers tightened over the tiny ornament she held, with a grasp which grew every instant more intense, and Dr. Walter could see how she was trembling. Still her face was turned away, and she said nothing until—at last—he very gently touched the hand nearest him with his own, when she suddenly turned, held out both hands and lifted her face to his, only to hide it again the next instant, but this time on his shoulder, as she said: "Will I?—I do love you."

VILLENELLE.

In the wood walks alone,
With the sad dying year,
While the winds sob and moan,
And the dead leaves are thrown
Dry, drifted, and sere,
In the wood walks alone,

The old days we have known
All unstained by a tear;
While the winds sob and moan,
Dressed in seeming long gone,
Hover living and near,
In the wood walks alone.

The great branches groan
Like to mortals in fear,
While the winds sob and moan;
For the months are laid prone
On their black, sodden bier,
In the wood walks alone,
While the winds sob and moan.

A NORTHUMBRIAN FORTRESS.

THERE is a story told of a North-country parson who, making a purchase in Watling Street, London, amazed the salesman who asked him if he could send the parcel anywhere, by answering:

"Yes, if you like to send it, you may. I live in this street; but I don't want to pay the carriage."

"Pay the carriage!" exclaimed the dealer, "there won't be any carriage to pay if, as you say, you live in our street."

"Well," said the jocular parson, "I do live on the Watling Street, two hundred and eighty miles away, in the county of Durham."

In the same way the writer, arriving at the lone Northumbrian fortress which is the subject of this paper, astonished one of the few occupants of the place, who asked him whence he came, by replying:

"From Rochester, on the Watling

Street, about three hundred and twenty miles off."

"But this is Rochester, and the Watling Street runs yander," said the native wonderingly, and could only be made clear on the subject by the production of a map and the indication of our Kentish Rochester on the southern extremity of the same old Roman road.

High Rochester, our lone fortress, stands in the midst of a wild, sequestered country, so full of historic, and legendary, and romantic interest, that it seems strange that in this all-exploring age, it should remain an almost unknown country, except to that most intelligent, industrious, and enthusiastic body of gentlemen, the Northumbrian antiquaries.

Yet so it is. The nearest railway station is ten miles away; but within half-a-mile of it runs the direct coach-road from Newcastle to Jedburgh in Scotland—the same old road along which Sir Henry Percy marched with his nine thousand men, on the eve of that fatal Saint Oswald's Day, 1388, to wrest from the proud Douglas the pennon which the latter had won from him under the walls of the "canny toon." Yet visitors are few and far between; and lonely, and all but deserted, the old fortress stands on its quadrangular eminence, once the most important Roman stronghold in the North—now a poor shadow of its former self.

To the explorer who arrives at the southern gateway, or, rather, at the huge stones which represent it, after having tramped mile after mile along that famous old Watling Street, so irritatingly straight, yet with a fascination of its own, High Rochester does not seem to present many objects of interest. He finds himself in the midst of a quadrangle, two sides of which are occupied by commonplace-looking farm-buildings, and the other two sides open to every wind which blows.

Twenty years ago, we are told, on the site of the present cottages, there still remained two very perfect specimens of the old Borderland domestic fortress, known as "Pele Towers." For, after the last Roman legionary had hurried away homewards to protect his own enervated and decaying metropolis, it was not likely that so strategically perfect a position, commanding the main road and on the foeman's border, should long remain unnoticed and unappropriated. All is so perfectly calm and peaceful here on this fair October morning, that it is hard to realise what terrible scenes

must have been enacted in and about this old quadrangle of half-hidden stones, during the centuries which followed the Roman exodus from Bremenium. Britons and Saxons must have fought many a bloody fight for its possession ere the days of Border warfare between Englishman and Scot set in; and, as if to preserve the tradition of bloodshed associated with the place, High Rochester—we are informed by an old Mutiny veteran who lives in one of the cottages—after the final extinguishing of Border war, became the local place of execution, and even now is sometimes spoken of as Gallows Hill.

Many and many a death-fray must have rolled up and down the slopes of the green fell on which the stalwart shepherd now watches his flock, and along that old causeway now merely marked by a bank, and in and about that triple line of ditch and vallum, which guards the fortress on the north; when Redesdale turned out to greet Teviotdale, or Liddesdale, or, as often as not, when, in default of any other foe-man, one Redesdale clan fought with another—Hall against Potter, Hedley against Fletcher, Reed against Charlton. The old walls of the fortress have, of course, suffered from the ravages of eighteen centuries, but still more from the hand of man, who found in them excellent building material, as the village of Rochester itself down below on the road, and every wall and shepherd's cottage in the neighbourhood, testify. But here and there, amidst the luxuriant undergrowth we may still admire the skill of the old Roman builders, in the lines of evenly squared, firmly set stones, whilst with the superposition of a few stones we may almost build the western gate as it was. The corners of the camp, it may be noted, are rounded. On the hills west of the little burn which runs at the foot of the eminence are the extensive remains of another camp, probably a summer fortress; and about a mile eastward, along the course of the Watling Street, are traces of a cemetery, from which several circular and ornamental "cippi" have been unearthed.

We have only to look at the map and to take into consideration the physical peculiarities of the surrounding country, to appreciate the importance attached by the Roman generals to the fortress of Bremenium. It commanded what was then the only road to Scotland, where the chief danger lay, in this part of the country; for, although there was probably always a track

over the Carter Fell that also ran within a few hundred yards of the fortress, and was easily defended, and all around was either pathless morass or wild fell, admirably adapted for the swift, silent, and hidden movements of the barbarians who, without an outlying fort as an obstacle, and as a means of keeping up communication, could easily sweep down upon Hadrian's Wall, some five and twenty miles to the south. Moreover, between High Rochester and the Cheviot Hills, were, at least, three other camps—one still retains the name, "Ad Fines;" a second is of trapezoid shape near the Cottonshope burn; and the third was just out of High Rochester. Along the line of these camps, intelligence of an invasion could pass far swifter by the sound, solid Watling Street to Rochester, and thence to the Wall, than could an invading army get over the Carter, and along the rough native track.

Hence High Rochester occupied to Roman Britain in this part of the country, much the same position that Dover has always occupied on the southern coast—that of a sentinel and a base of communication. But with Rochester taken, the invaders would have gone on, only to find another hard nut to crack at Habitancum, near the modern hideous little village of Woodburn, not to speak of camps on almost every prominent fell-top. But we imagine Rochester to have been well-nigh impregnable, if we may judge by the character of its remains and its outlying defences.

But after all, perhaps, to the romantic explorer the greatest interest of High Rochester lies in the country immediately around it.

If we follow the line of hills running in a south-easterly direction, past the gaunt mass of Shittleheugh Pele Tower, we reach a spot almost sacred to all lovers of our old English ballad literature—the field of Otterburn.

Near the Greenchester Farm are lines of earthworks—erroneously, we are told, considered to be Roman, although we confess to having held that belief—said to mark the Scottish camp which Sir Henry Percy surprised whilst its occupants were at supper. But the centre of the battle was further off, just about where Otterburn Castle now stands; and, to reach the most interesting spot of all, we must descend to the road near the National Schools, and enter a small plantation.

Here, amidst appropriate surroundings

in the shape of battered, ragged, ever-moaning pines, stands a rude stone monument. Here, tradition says, lies the body of the fierce Douglas, and here was enacted that pathetic incident when the victor, Lord Percy, took the dead man by the hand, and paid an unaffected tribute of regret to the chivalrous hero, whose name still clings to the monument. The very loneliness of the situation, the very neglect apparent, lend a charm to this old-world relic which we feel would be lacking were more fuss made about it. If Douglas Cross were within reach of London, it would be formally paled round; the grass at its foot kept trim and neat; the very stone itself probably touched up and titivated, and a charge made for admission to view; but here its simplicity; its undisguised antiquity; the utter informality of the approach which is by a winding path through shin-deep grass, adapt themselves exactly to the feelings inspired by a recollection of the glorious old story of its why and wherefore.

Pursuing our course along the road we arrive at the pretty little village of Otterburn, a famous angling centre, but otherwise as unobtrusive and unremarkable a place as one could look for.

Yet we are here in the heart of Redesdale, not very many years ago the wildest and most lawless district in England, the inhabitants of which bore such an evil reputation for their poaching, drinking, gambling, and fighting habits, that amongst the ancient Corporation statutes of Newcastle is one which forbids any employer taking as apprentice a native of Redesdale or Tynedale. The modern inhabitants, who follow purely pastoral and agricultural pursuits, are remarkable for their steadiness, their religious tendencies, and, above all, for their high standard of education; and it is hard to believe that they are the lineal descendants of such wild outlaws until we find that the old clan names still exist, and that in many cases properties have not changed hands for centuries.

About half a mile due west from Otterburn, on the Watling Street, is Troughend Hall, associated with another ballad almost as famous as that of the Battle of Otterburn—namely, the Story of Parcy Reed.

Parcy Reed, of Troughend Hall or Tower, as it was then called, was a sort of warden for this part of Redesdale, and in his magisterial capacity had hung a notorious freebooter from the Scottish side, by name Crosier. Thereupon, as was the genial

custom of those days when the quarrel of one man was taken up by all his relatives, a feud was sworn against Reed of Troughend by the Crosiers.

One morning Parcy Reed went out to hunt, accompanied by three neighbours of the name of Hall, from Girsonsfield. At Batinghope, "when the sun was sinking low," they halted to rest, and Parcy Reed went to sleep. Whilst asleep, five of the Crosiers, burning for revenge, came up. The Halls awakened Parcy; but he found that, during his sleep, they had

Stown the bridle off his steed,
And they've put water in his lang gun;
They've fixed his sword within the sheath,
That out again it winna come.

and, to add to their treachery, they refused to help him, so that he was killed by the Crosiers. Long after this event the Hall family were known in Redesdale as "the fause Ha's of Girsonsfield"; and there may be some now who believe that the ghost of Parcy Reed still walks the banks of Pringle Haugh burn.

Elishaw was a noted rendezvous of gipsies; and Wully Faa, the gipsy King, here held wild and lawless court, when the authorities over the Border made Kirk-Yetholm, the gipsy-centre, too hot for him. Here, too, when Lord Cranshaws was owner of the place, Wull Allen, and his still more famous son, Jamie, bewitched the native ear with the strains of the Northumbrian bagpipes; but for their skill in music, as well as in angling, readers may be referred to the old "Lay of the Reedwater Minstrel." It may be remarked here that in no manner can a stranger more deeply offend a patriotic Northumbrian than by confounding the bagpipes of his country with those of the Scottish Highlanders; and we have heard that great umbrage was given some time ago when the pipers of the Northumberland Militia were arrayed in the large Scottish shepherd's plaid instead of the small white and black check plaid of the old Tosson pattern.

Northward from High Rochester stretch the glorious fells, which so charm the South-countryman by their complete realisation of the phrase, "romantic solitude." In them are blended the grandeur and wildness of the Devonshire moorland; the historic romance of the chalk uplands of Wiltshire and Berkshire; and the sweet open breeziness of the Sussex South Downs, combined with other characteristics—the outcome of climate.

He who scorns the aid of the pocket compass is very soon brought to his reckoning here, for one may wander hour after hour without seeing a sign of human life; and, indeed, almost shut away from life of any kind but that of the wild birds. Yet there are abundant evidences that once these moorland solitudes must have been fairly well populated. Road tracks run across the short, crisp grass, which are still used, but which were traced long before the first stone was laid of High Rochester Fortress.

On hill-tops innumerable we may note the circular outlines of old British towns and settlements, strange, colossal remains, which still preach to us sermons on the mutability of human greatness, with examples drawn from a long-past dead life. Earthworks, religious circles, cairns, and barrows abound; and so utter is the silence that the most unsentimental of explorers must, amidst such surroundings, be impressed with the feeling of travelling through a dead world.

Small wonder, then, that the land has an enormous spiritual population of ghosts, elves, and fairies. Not that the inhabitants themselves have an atom of sentiment or poetry in their composition. They are far too hard-headed and practical for such possessions, and their universally high standard of education has made them thinkers rather than dreamers; but old traditions and legends die hard in a land to which, as yet, metropolitan influences have scarcely penetrated, and so the old stories are told more from habit than credulity; and, little as the narrator believes in them himself, it is not always wise for the stranger to express his unbelief in too contemptuous terms.

Amongst the many extraordinary changes wrought amongst this stalwart, industrious people in a comparatively short space of time has been the complete burying of the hatchet of war between them and their neighbours over the Border. And this is the more remarkable, when we remember that for many hundreds of years the differences and distinctions between the Englishman on one side of the Carter Fell, and the Scotsman on the other, were more strong than are the differences and distinctions between the modern Saxon and the modern Irishman. Intermarriages and constant commercial intercourse have blended the two peoples at this point so that there is as much Scottish as Northumbrian in the dialect spoken, and as

many Scottish as English names on shop-fronts and cart-boards. Some sparks of the old international rivalry may break forth at the annual games held at Wooler and Kirk-Yetholm, and "Jeddart," when the "wrestlin'" comes on; but there are none of those petty rivalries, and jealousies, and spites, which we would imagine must survive so many years of constant warfare; and the stranger should be very careful not to ridicule things Scottish in Redesdale nor things English over the Cheviots. One social feature—a very pleasant one—still survives as a characteristic as much of the present as of the past, the strict observance of the laws of hospitality. No student of the past need be told that even during the darkest and bloodiest periods of Border warfare, the stranger who asked for shelter and food, no matter who he was, was never turned from the gates, in obedience to a law as sacred amongst the wild Borderers as it is amongst the desert Arabs of to-day.

So it is now in Redesdale. The writer has tramped hundreds of miles, in all directions, over the country lying north of the Roman Wall, and in no single case, except, of course, when the house was an inn, was payment accepted from him for the bread and cheese and milk, or whisky, set before him. This rule obtains alike in the lowliest shepherd's hut and the substantial farmhouse. Another remarkable feature in the local character is the almost universal intelligence concerning matters historic or antiquarian. As a rule, in Kent or Sussex, the visitor knows more about the local ruin, or camp, than the oldest inhabitant, whose stereotyped reply to questions generally takes the form of "Dunno, sir, I'm sure," and who cannot for the life of him conceive what possible interest, for anyone, there can be in a line of entrenchments, or a bit of crumbling masonry, or a curious church. But in our northernmost counties it is very different. Our guide over the Field of Otterburn was a giant from the plough-tail, but he knew all about the famous fight, and if he did exaggerate the English prowess a little it was pardonable in a man, hundreds of whose ancestors had, perhaps, fallen beneath claymore and Lochaber axe.

We had remarked the same local interest in local history during a pilgrimage, a few days previously, along the Roman Wall, from Newcastle to Bowness on the Solway, and we found it a few days after on Flodden Field. As for country clergy-

men, squires, and men of education, they are almost, without exception, enthusiasts; and no expenditure of time or trouble is deemed by them too great to show and explain to the stranger what is locally interesting; so that, if the explorer misses points of interest, it is certainly not the fault of those in whose country he finds himself.

THE CONTENTED MIND.

SOME years ago, a great philosopher blew a loud and clanging blast upon his trumpet, declaring that, but for the tendency towards discontent, men would never have emerged from the brute condition, provoking by this utterance of his a long-continued and clattering tattoo on the drum ecclesiastic in reply. Then followed a long and brain-perplexing succession of Replies, and Rejoinders, and Last Words, and More Last Words, and Symposiums, and other terrible weapons of printed dialectic. I never read more than the titles of any of them, and I should probably have gone down to my grave without further illumination in the matter, if the divine under whom I regularly sit had not taken upon himself one Sunday to bring in his morsel to the collation of controversy. "The man who could talk in such a strain about the virtue of contentment," he affirmed, "must be an Infidel. There was no reason why an Infidel should speak Truth, rather than Falsehood; therefore the whole of the professor's contention was necessarily false." The conclusion, I fancied, might not be found to flow naturally from the premises, if subjected to a severe examination; but it sounded splendidly when given out from the security of the pulpit. I had a lurking idea that there was a bit of the truth hidden away somewhere under the crude outside of the professor's utterance; and it puzzled me rather to fathom the cause of the fury with which the clerical mind was, in this instance, affected. At last it came into my remembrance how, when I was a little boy, I once firmly believed that "money is the root of all evil," because I had written out the above sentiment some hundred times, as a writing exercise. Doubtless, I reasoned, the reverend gentleman, in his school days, was once condemned to write out as an imposition, the maxim, "A contented mind is a continual feast," and has ever since suffered from an exaggerated reverence for the so-called virtue of contentment.

As I turned the matter over in my mind, I soon came to the conclusion that the professor had not spoken a bit too strongly. I felt likewise that he might have given his message sooner to the world. Preachers and poets have had things too much their own way, and have gone on preaching and singing the blessings of contentment till man has learnt to regard it as the most precious heritage he possesses. Contentment has established itself firmly as a virtue in our domestic sanctuaries, and has become a word of power in the mouths of parents and guardians counselling wisdom; but, somehow, their counsel does not seem to strike deep. Englishmen are not remarkable for letting things be as they are. Most of them, perhaps unconsciously, take the professor's view rather than the preacher's. If it be not so, how is it that the grumbling Englishman has become a proverbial personage? How is it that the Anglo-Saxon race, instead of resting within the bounds of its tight little island, has overflowed to the uttermost parts of the earth?

With such as these, the uncomfortable stimulants of adversity have, no doubt, operated to minimise any prejudices in favour of contentment; but I can call to mind a dozen instances of men who might surely be content to run along smoothly in the groove into which they have been dropped by Fortune, but who, instead, beat their wings incessantly against the gilded bars of their cages.

To show how deep-seated this tendency to rebel against their surroundings is in some natures, I will quote the case of my friend Philip. Philip was born of good old yeoman stock. His forefathers of the past three or four generations—prudent men living in good times—had added field to field, until the estate, which lay round about their comfortable house, was as large as that of many of the duly recognised squires, and in incomparably better order. His people, with the old-fashioned pride of their class, shrank resolutely from anything like an upward move into the social grade above them; but Philip, when he came into his inheritance, found himself, from the operation of various causes, in a position differing widely from that occupied by any of his predecessors.

To begin with, he was an only child—the child, moreover, of an ambitious mother. No member of the family had ever yet gone to the University; but Philip was sent to Oxford, where his

career was most satisfactory. He acquired enough of learning to make him wish for more, and thus qualified himself for that life which, in the judgement of many, is the happiest of all—a life of lettered ease. He succeeded early to his inheritance, and soon after married. Two fair children were born to him, and then came the one adverse stroke that Fortune ever dealt him—his young wife was taken from him by death. For a season it seemed to him that his whole life was wrecked; but, great as was his loss, it did not fall upon him without compensation. Some natures a heavy grief will deform and mar; others it will refine and stimulate to mount to higher and serener regions of being; and Philip, happily for himself, had been fashioned in the latter mould. He left his home for a time, seeking consolation in foreign travel, in the world of books, and in the society of his more sympathetic friends. In his travels he followed the model of the “grand tour,” rather than that of the contemporary personally conducted. He lingered as long as he liked in any place which took his fancy, and he spent his time in acquiring the language, and exploring the literature, and not in chattering tourist commonplace with chance English folk at the hotels, and in visiting the stock-sights as a matter of duty. He came back with a well-stored mind, and an intense craving for literary employment, and possible future fame; so he bought his bottle of ink and ream of paper, and set to work. After receiving a few of the rebuffs which are the almost inevitable fate of those who offer such wares as he had on hand, he secured a position as occasional contributor to a periodical, the reputation of which stood high enough to allow any of its staff to speak of his dealings therewith without any ring of apology.

Since this start he has written a novel, which had a marked success; he has brought out a play which ran for fifty nights; and he has published a volume of essays which were the talk of the town, on account of their freshness and vigour. His children are delightful in every way. He has a neat little home in Mayfair, to which he betakes himself in the winter and spring, when the ways are miry, and the trees bare in the Midlands. He has friends in plenty, and of the sort he cares for at every turn. He lives as well as he wants on two-thirds of his income. If he liked he could marry anyone of half-a-dozen

charming women of his acquaintance; and yet, with all these good gifts, Philip, like a certain popular comedian, is not happy.

In quoting the case of Philip, I feel I am putting a sharp word into the hand of any possible adversary. Here I am bringing out a man blessed far beyond the mean of worldly beatitude, and unhappy, notwithstanding. I may be told how much better it would have been for him had he been mulcted of two-thirds of his good fortune, and, in exchange, have been endowed with that contented mind which has proved such a priceless possession in numberless cases. Philip, in short, is debarred from the continual feast because he has not the contented mind.

Before giving judgement in the matter, it may be well to consider whether this strain of discontent, in giving to Philip's life a shade of unhappiness, may not perhaps have made a better man of him than he would have been had he been gifted to the full with the contented mind, and tasted the continual feast amid such surroundings as wait upon the average country gentleman. The chief dishes in this banquet, I take it, would have been his enrolment in the Commission of the Peace for the county, and the numerous most useful, though not very elevating, duties appertaining to the office. He would have tempered justice with mercy at the meetings of the Board of Guardians. He might have taken to farming in a small way, and have learnt how gentlemen in his position are always expected to buy in the dearest market, and sell in the cheapest. He would have become a diligent reader of the county paper; less anxious to open the “Times,” a day old; and possibly quite ignorant of such high-class journals as the “Plain Liver” and the “High Thinker.” On the walls of his library most likely would have been ranged “Hume and Smollet's History,” “The British Essayist,” “Alison's Europe,” “The Works of Josephus,” and many other volumes of light and entertaining reading. What a contrast is this ideal picture to the reality of his dainty library in C—— Street! There we shall find a few of the philosophic historians and certain volumes of religious controversy; but if we are to forecast the dominant mood of Philip from the contents of his bookshelves, we shall decide that it is in agreement with those poets, essayists, and critics, who maintain that such controversy brings with it an atmosphere which they cannot breathe. I often

wonder whether Philip, though he goes regularly to church, has joined the ranks of those who are sure of nothing; and, if he has, whether this adhesion is the cause of his discontent.

As many people rate happiness, Philip, no doubt, would have been happier had he stuck altogether to his garden and his magisterial duties, and brought nothing else away from Oxford except the letters which he might, when he so willed, write after his name. But when we begin to theorise about happiness, we must not forget that Mr. Carlyle has left us thirty volumes full of exhortation that man was not sent into the world to be happy, but to be good; to polish himself as near perfection as possible, so as to be meet to stand as a worthy stone in the great temple of humanity.

Once, when paying a visit to my friend at his house in the country, I spent some portion of my time in investigating certain details of life in Arcady; details which I could scarcely master by merely looking out of the study windows of the Manor House at the pretty village grouped at the bottom of the pasture. From the reports of certain Special Commissioners I had been led to believe that contentment no longer reigned in Arcady, and I resolved to see for myself how far the story of this new progress of discontent might be true.

On the outskirts of the village, on the face of a hill, with a lovely view over the winding valley beneath and the wooded rise beyond, stood an old thatched cottage, one of the few which had escaped the hand of the sanitary reformer. It was in fairly good repair; a pretty garden, with honeysuckles and hollyhocks, beehives and poultry, all after the pattern of ideal cottages, lay round it. It was, indeed, by far the most picturesque object I met with in my walks abroad; and every time I pass it, I noticed a venerable old man with snowy hair and a peaceful countenance, sitting in a sunny corner, with his hands folded on the top of his stick, clad in a real smock frock, and evidently on the look-out for a gossip with any passer-by who might have the time to spare for a chat.

I soon became on speaking terms with Robin Dykes—for so was the old man called—and our conversation invariably followed the lines of the life and adventures of Robin Dykes, his past experiences, and his present condition; varied now and then by anecdotes of the sayings and

doings of other and more venturesome spirits, who had been companions of his youth. Many an hour did I spend with Robin; and it will be almost necessary to add that I heard all his stories afresh at each sitting. It was, as he rambled along, that I first conceived the idea of investigating the claims of Content to be numbered amongst the virtues. Robin was blessed with the contented mind; and, so complex is the working of human nature, he was at the same time profoundly discontented that every one else was not contented. Thus either from Content or Discontent, he managed to get a bite at the continual feast; and I would be the last to grumble or to try and sweep away his very frugal banquet by calling to life desires after something more elevated. "Quies non movet," is a maxim which should possess some sanctity now and then, even to the most ardent reformer; and in cases like that of Robin Dykes I am quite willing to let things run along as they were. I merely wish to enter a humble protest against the once glorification of Content, and will try to show that a world, made of people who talk and think like Robin Dykes, would not be a profitable or a pleasant world to live in.

Without much trouble I managed to extract from Robin his notions of the theory of life, and to realise what things he had classed as good, and what as bad, in his journey through life. In spite of his views as to contentment, my old friend was by no means free from the common belief of elders, holding that things in general were in a very poor way compared with what he remembered when he was a young fellow.

"There don't 'pear to be no life a-sturrin' about these parts nowadays, sir, like as there was when I was a young chap. My Uncle Ben—him as lay o' the left-hand side o' the church path as you go in—he wur' the master-boy for a bit o' fun, he wur'. Why, I ha' heard him say as he wur' summoned afor' the bench at Willford nine times in one year for gettin' drunk. And his son, Black Ben they called him, did more nor his father, and got sent away to Botany Bay; and they do tell me that his son is now a rich man, with as many sheep as would reach from here to Hardleham Church, if you put 'em all in a line. But, lawk-a-massy, folks tell such a sight o' lies nowadays, that there's no believin' 'em; and, even if 't be true, young Ben had better ha' been at home a-drivin' of a

team o' horses on the land; for what's the good o' havin' a lot o' sheep, if a man ha' got to live in Australey, and get eaten up by the Blacks, perhaps. And then there was allus lots o' poachin' a goin' on: and my Uncle Ben used to do a tidy stroke o' that. He was one o' that party o' young chaps as took all Squire Bullin's pheasants out of the long wood down yonder the night afore they was to be shot. The keepers, they was there; but they never expected such a strong party, else they wouldn't ha' showed fight. Tim Belden, the head keeper, got a crack o' the skull as he never got over; and Harry Thompson, one o' the poachin' chaps, got his thigh broke with tumblin' into a clay pit, and was on the parish thirty years and more. They beat the keepers off and got a matter o' two hundred pheasants, and sold 'um to a fellow as drove a fish cart, 'twixt Settleby and Barton Crown. The game all went to Lunnon by coach, and my Uncle Ben and the other chaps was drunk off and on for a fortnight with the money they earned that night. Ah, sir, young fellows don't get chances like that nowadays. The place 'pears to be asleep, and there's nothin' stirrin'."

To hint to Robin Dykes that any benefit had flowed from the operation of any one of the numerous Acts of Parliament, with which our legislators are trying to coddle our rural population all through the seven ages, was like showing a red rag to a bull. The remembrance of life, as it was in his prime, furnished him with an ideal; and, knowing of nothing more to his taste, and caring not to search, he wanted all men to be ground in the same mill as he himself had passed through.

"Why can't they let us alone? We don't interfere wi' them. There must be rich folks and poor folks," was his comment on every fresh act of administrative activity.

In the days when I first met him, the educational authorities in the rural districts had not been stimulated into full operation; but even then, they had done enough to provoke Robin's criticism, and some of his remarks on what he called "skewlin'" were very comical:

"A boy may learn to read his book, sir; but that on't fill his belly nor teach him how to manage a hoss. There's that boy Tom, my grandson. I got him put on under Bill Emery, Mr. Morton's head team man; but he hadn't been there a week afore Mr. Morton came to me, and he said,

said he: 'Robin, that there boy Tom is no better nor a fool.' 'Well, sir,' I said, said I, 'that ain't to be wondered at. How should the poor boy know anything, seein' as he ha' been at skewle all his life!'"

One day I tried to get out of Robin a good word on behalf of a new row of very pretty cottages which my friend had just built after the most approved plan; but I might as well have talked to the Rock of Gibraltar.

"Model cottages they call 'em." Robin pronounced the obnoxious adjective something like "muddle," and I fancied afterwards it might have been a grim joke of his. "I wish them as built 'em had to sleep in 'em. I lodged for a year or more in one of 'em along o' my son-in-law, and I was almost fruz to death with cold, 'cos the squire had made a rule as all three o' the rooms should be occupied. So I and the boys slept in one, and the galls in another, and my darter and her husband in the other; but when the winter came on there was no standin' the cold, and we all had to git together again as we did in the old cottage. Ah, sir, they make a sight o' fuss about new things; but when you come to be as old as I am, you'll see as the old 'uns will beat 'em holler.

"You're a stayin' at the Manor, ain't you, sir? Master Philip is a tidy young chap; but, Lord, you should ha' seen his grandfather. He was a sharp man o' business; but fond of a frolic, for all that. I don't suppose as he ever cum back from Settleby Market sober; and one year he rode two hosses to death with the hounds. He didn't waste his time goin' to college and readin' books like this young chap; but folks ain't the same nowadays, as they was forty years ago."

And so Robin would "moral on the times," and pass his remarks on all the whole range of the social state that lay within his narrow ken. Robin was, it is true, but a leaf in the breeze, a straw on the stream; but his discourse may serve as a fair sample of what comes, if the virtue of contentment be intemperately pursued. His was the contented mind of the maxim which men praise in such unthinking, meaningless fashion. If a parallel mood had reigned in the beginning of things, it is doubtful whether life would ever have burst the limits of the primordial molecule. Certainly, if at Robin's birth all men had stood upon the same lines as his own, the social conditions set forth

and commended by the poor old man in such artless wise would still be raging around us unchecked. It will not serve for the contemporary preachers and teachers of contentment to affirm that, if they had lived and worked amongst those shocking surroundings which gave no offence to Robin Dykes, they would have gone in for discontent themselves, and lifted up their voices to cry for reform.

With this bent of mind, which proclaims itself in all their utterances, the argument in favour of "*laissez faire*" would have swayed them just as strongly then as now. The contrast of the better and purer state of things in which we now live—the harvest, as it were, of discontent—would not have been at hand to throw up the squalor of their surrounding conditions, and to shock their consciences into reforming activity, and they themselves would have cried out with Robin, "Why can't they let us alone!"

Robin is now near the end of his pilgrimage, so he may be left in peace; the hour when he might have been with profit stimulated into discontent, struck long ago; but it will hardly do for us to act after the spirit of his favourite maxim in directing the footsteps of those who are just setting out on their life's journey.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER III.—RIVER GATE

CANON PERCIVAL, in his own line, was a much cleverer and wiser man than Colonel Ward pretended to think him.

He was by no means a fool: he had a remarkable faculty for sticking to his point and having his own way. He had done everything he wanted to do in life, so far. The authorities of his college were reasonably proud of him, and had given him one of their best livings, Saint Martha's, in the city of Woolsborough; a canonry in the Cathedral had followed. He had married early in life, carrying off a prize, whom two at least of his friends envied him. He had pleasant manners, and managed his Curates and his parish very well; he was also very friendly with his brethren of the Chapter. Some evil-disposed people laughed at him, though he was a good-looking, dignified man;

perhaps because he was a little too dignified sometimes, and they said he was ambitious, and wanted to be a Bishop. There were also people who disliked and distrusted him; no one, perhaps, liked him heartily; and yet no one had anything really to say against him.

He was not a rich man; but he was careful and prudent, and managed to live very comfortably in his beautiful old house close to the Cathedral. Every one liked Mrs. Percival, and was charmed to go to her parties, which had been made more attractive than usual, this summer, by the presence of her soldier son from India, and her pretty niece, Miss Darrell.

River Gate was a large square red house at the south-west corner of the Close. Its tall stately door and rows of windows looked north, fronting rows of elms and the Chapter-house, and then the Cathedral. To the west and south of the house, a fine old garden in terraces sloped down to the broad river, which was the charm and life of Woolsborough. Under the lowest terrace of the garden was an ancient archway, crumbled by time and overgrown with ivy, where one could turn in from the towing-path and mount up by steps into the Close, and so on, by narrow walled ways, past fragments of old towers and defences, to the west front of the Cathedral. This river gate, which gave its name to Canon Percival's house, was also a private way, by a flight of steps with a locked gate, from his garden to the river.

Mrs. Percival was alone in her drawing-room on Saturday afternoon. Outside, on the high gravel terrace with its red flower-pots, the sun was shining with a soft September brilliancy; but the three tall west windows were darkened, so that there was a deep restful shade in the room. There was also a delightful scent of flowers, and a great deal of varied colour, for which Mrs. Percival had such a fancy that the Canon had been heard to remark, "This room is scarcely ecclesiastical." There were several little dogs, and a tea-table, and a slight general confusion, as if people had been there not long ago. And this was the case, for some visitors had just gone away with Canon Percival into the Cathedral; their large carriage was still driving round and round the Close.

Mrs. Percival appeared to be a little uneasy in her mind, and disturbed from her usual amiability. She snubbed the little dogs when they begged of her, and told them they were greedy. She walked round

the room, pushed the chairs about, went out on the terrace, listened, and tried to look up the river; but trees, and walls, and houses prevented her seeing much.

"I wonder if I have done right," she muttered to herself, taking a quick turn along the terrace; "but knowing Vincent so well, poor dear—I wonder if I ought to have put him off till Monday. He is sure to come now—still the train must be late. Good gracious, here he is!"

With both hands stretched out, and the sweetest smile, and all the pretty grace that belonged to her, she hurried back into the drawing-room to receive Paul Romaine.

"Here you are, my dear! I had almost given you up. So glad to see you. How well you are looking!"

Paul was glancing quickly round the room, the dear old room, bright and sweet as ever. Red Towers was certainly dismal by contrast. But where was his own particular possession, who was going to make Red Towers the most brilliant place in the world?

"Thanks so much! Where's Celia?" he said, smiling and half-shy.

"Yes, of course she ought to have been here to meet you. Try not to be impatient; she will be in very soon. Sit down and have some tea."

"Could I find her?" said Paul.

He had been unreasonable, no doubt; but somehow he had expected to see Celia on the platform at the railway station; and when she was not there, he made sure that she would be under the archway at the entrance of the Close; and then he had told himself, "No, she wouldn't like that, she will be here in the hall;" but no one received him in the hall. Even the drawing-room was empty, till, after the first instant, Mrs. Percival came in. And he not seen Celia since the end of June, when he went abroad, immediately after his engagement.

Paul had been patient enough: he had allowed Mrs. Percival to put him off on one excuse or another, untroubled by doubts. The time was to come which would make amends for everything; and now it was come, and had brought nothing but disappointment. Paul took no notice of the little dogs who were jumping upon him, or of Mrs. Percival's kind advice and offer of tea. He walked across to the window.

"Is she anywhere in the garden?" he said.

There was a certain sacred spot in the

garden, where one evening, more than two months ago, Celia had let him worship her. Everyone else was very proud of his University honours; but she only smiled and looked at him with a shade more interest than before. He had known well enough that these things made no difference to her; but still he had worked with all his strength, partly from natural love of the work, partly to make himself in his own eyes more worthy of her. Some people said that Celia flirted; but she had never flirted with him. Her manner was even cold. Whatever Colonel Ward may have thought, Paul had not had much of what is commonly called encouragement. Perhaps she knew that a look, a smile, a word now and then, was enough to keep Paul where she chose him to be; and, if so, she was a wise girl not to give him any more. Anyhow, when he could be kept within due bounds no longer, she let him speak, and smiled in earnest, and very sweetly accepted him, and Red Towers, and all the rest of it.

Mrs. Percival was, of course, immensely pleased. She had a great respect for Celia's talents, and thought she would make a very good wife for Paul. For Celia herself what could be more desirable! One may fear that Colonel Ward's notion of anything dishonourable in the arrangement never even occurred to Mrs. Percival's mind; and yet she was not quite at ease. She was troubled, at first, by three anxieties: that their summer at Woolsborough would be quite spoilt by tiresome gossip, curiosity, and congratulations (Celia disliked this prospect as much as she did); that her son Vincent, who did not like Paul, and scoffed at him, and was very meddlesome, would in some way spoil the whole thing if he knew it; that Celia had engaged herself to Paul without caring for him in the least. For Mrs. Percival, though she might be worldly and calculating, was soft-hearted, too, and sincerely fond of Paul.

The two first anxieties were disposed of by Celia's wise resolution, that no one but her uncle and aunt should know of her engagement till they left Woolsborough in the autumn. As to the third, when her aunt murmured a few caressing words on the subject, she answered calmly:

"Oh, Paul is a dear boy. I always love boys."

"Will he find that satisfying?" suggested Mrs. Percival, lifting her eyebrows with a faint, dismayed smile.

"Don't be anxious about him; he is quite happy," said Celia; and she added after a moment, "If I wait to marry till I am in love, dear, I shall never marry at all. I don't know what it is. I haven't got it in me."

"Oh, Celia!" Mrs. Percival smiled a little more, and ceased her remonstrances.

But since then, throughout the summer months, she had often been visited by troublesome thoughts, doubting whether it would not have been the best policy, after all, to tell the whole truth at once—to the Bishop, the Chapter, the county, the city, the household—and more especially to Captain Percival, her son. He—his long idle hours passed perpetually with Celia, intimate, friendly, admiring—was in fact his mother's one great towering anxiety. Words of warning had been on her lips several times, and then the truth would certainly have slipped out; but then she remembered Celia's cool worldly wisdom, and Vincent's expressed conviction that in these days a man must marry money, or not at all; and the Canon, when she hinted something to him, asked her smiling whether either of these young people was a fool; and so she kept to her intention, and now, in September, Celia's engagement to Paul Romaine was still a secret. Only Mrs. Percival wished in her heart that she could have kept Paul, for his own sake, away from Woolsborough a few days longer.

She looked at him anxiously, as he moved restlessly to the window. In old days she had always been able to manage Paul: his affectionate, unsuspecting nature had given her no trouble; but this sudden chill of disappointment, this eager pain, which made him turn away suddenly from her now, seemed for a moment almost beyond her diplomatic powers. She felt angry with Celia, who had known quite well what time Paul was coming. But perhaps it was Vincent's fault. She wished that they had not gone out together on this particular afternoon. But Vincent was going away on Monday, and would have been dreadfully injured if his cousin had thought it necessary to stay at home to-day.

"I am very sorry Celia is not in, Paul," said Mrs. Percival in her sweetest tones. "I know she meant to be here. But Vincent wanted her to go out in the boat with him—he leaves us on Monday—and as he knows nothing, you see, it may have been a little difficult to bring him back in time. You mustn't be angry with Celia."

"Angry! Nothing of the sort," said Paul. He laughed, and came back to the table, and quietly took his cup of tea from Mrs. Percival, who looked up smiling into his eyes. "I rather wish everybody had known about it from the first," he said.

"Do you?" she answered. "But it would not have made much difference to you, dear boy, as you were away all the time. And we had our little reasons, you know. But now, after next week, of course everybody may be told. We think of moving to Holm in about a week's time."

"May I stay here till then?" asked Paul.

"Of course. I thought you would. And now tell me about Switzerland."

"There's nothing to tell you, except that it was very jolly."

"And what have you been doing since you came home?"

"Shooting. There are really a great lot of birds this year. The Colonel and I have had some capital sport."

"The Canon will be glad to hear that," said Mrs. Percival. "And how is the dear old Colonel? So you told him our news—and how did he take it? Was he the least bit hurt that you had not told him before?"

"Well, perhaps he was," Paul confessed. He looked on the floor, slightly confused, for certainly he could not tell Mrs. Percival how Colonel Ward took the news.

"I was afraid of that," said she. "He is a little touchy, poor dear!"

"He soon got over it," said Paul. "He thinks it's a good thing that Celia knows more about horses than I do. And I was talking over servants and things with him, you know—and he thinks it won't do to keep the Sabins."

"Why!" said Mrs. Percival with her pretty laugh. "Does he think Celia will want a dozen powdered footmen? Old bachelors are not the best judges, are they? But there will be plenty of time to settle all that; you need not bother yourself about changes just yet. In fact, if I were you, I would begin quietly—because you are not making a great match, you know, Paul."

"I think I am," he said in a low voice. He always felt very stupid, when a pretty speech seemed to be demanded of him, and generally rushed on to something else as fast as possible.

"When do you think she will let it be, Mrs. Percival?" he asked.

"You must ask her. But you are both so young that there need be no hurry."

"I hate waiting," said Paul. "What is the use of dragging through miserable days without any reason? It's a waste out of one's life—don't you know it is?"

"Well, no. I must say I was very happy and comfortable when I was engaged. Arthur, to be sure, was just as ridiculous as you are now. But then he had some reason for it, because I was not such a good steady girl as your Celia."

"Ah, I know," said Paul, smiling as he looked at her. "The Colonel has never got over it."

Mrs. Percival smiled too, looking quite conscious, and pretty, and young, though she was past fifty. Her hair was brown still, frizzed and curled under a most becoming cap; her complexion was soft and white; she had lovely hands; and her brown eyes had a way of smiling and shining which was irresistible.

"Poor dear! I do wish he had married somebody," she said. "And yet I don't know; he is very happy in that nice little house of yours. By the by, you must always go on asking his advice, Paul, or he will be injured."

"Trust me for that. Besides, I should be a fool if I didn't; he knows such a lot of things."

"Yes, so he does. And he is as good as gold, dear old fellow! I wonder now, Paul, whether he means to leave you his money."

"His money? Colonel Ward? I never thought about it," said Paul vaguely. "Has he got any? Not much, I should think."

"His uncle left him at least three or four thousand a year," said Mrs. Percival. "Do you mean to say you didn't know that? Of course he has lived all these years on three or four hundred."

"Really! Well, I never thought about it," repeated Paul. "Leave it to me! Of course not. Why should he?"

"He has no relations; and I believe he likes you better than anybody else."

"Except you. You are his favourite person in the world. I don't believe you could do anything the Colonel would think wrong, strict as he is. It's beautiful, you know, the way he talks about you, and the way he looks when one mentions your name."

They went on talking about Colonel Ward for some minutes, till the Canon came in with his rather grand air of welcome. After a few speeches to Paul, he began talking to his wife about the visitors who had just driven away; and then Paul, leaving them together, went out into the garden, and ran down to the lower terrace, and out under the old gateway to the towing-path, to watch for Celia.

It was a still, oppressive evening. Away across the deep green meadows, beyond the river, the sun was going down into a bank of cloud and fog, all suffused with a red light, which made the slow broad current glow with a sort of burnished splendour. Blue evening mists were beginning to hover about the river, and to creep up the steep, old, irregular streets which wound down to the quay, between the Cathedral and all its buildings, and the bridge a few hundred yards above. There were boats about the bridge, and children playing and screaming, and the river came sweeping down under the three wide arches, but Paul did not see the boat he was looking for. After all, he did not know whether Vincent Percival had taken his cousin up or down the river; Mrs. Percival could not tell him. So he looked up towards the bridge, and saw nothing; and turned round, and walked a little way in the other direction, towards a distance of willow-trees and far-stretching meadows, with houses and gardens here and there, the southern outskirts of the town. No boat, no Celia: the sun was almost obscured now, glimmering, a dim red ball, in the midst of the clouds, and the mists were gathering over the water. It was almost twilight; and still Paul paced up and down the towing-path, under the old river gate and the dark half-ruined walls with their heavy tresses of ivy. It struck him that he might go up to the bridge, to the man who had charge of the boats there; he would know if they had passed; and then it would be very possible to take a canoe, and go to meet them. But some mysterious instinct said: "Celia would not like that;" and so he stayed where he was, loitering about the archway, straining his eyes one way or the other, as the minutes dragged on and the twilight deepened.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER III. IN ARCADIA.

"THERE was no one in the house," said Hugh.

"No; we didn't expect you till to-morrow," May replied, taking a shy, rapid, complete, and very satisfactory survey of him.

"I didn't expect myself, till to-morrow," he said, with the old whimsical smile, by which May would have known him anywhere. "But I found that I could leave London this morning, and I was longing to see you."

"An' she thought you'd have forgotten her!" cried Con, who, leaning on the handle of his spade, looked on at their meeting with a paternal interest and pleasure. "'Con,' she says, 'he'll have forgotten me,' she says, wid her eyes a hundred miles off. 'Forgotten you, miss!' says I. 'Ay, begor, whin the swallow forgets summer,' says I."

"You were much more likely to have forgotten me, May."

She shook her head emphatically, while the irrepressible Con answered for her.

"Faix, it's but wan song she has, like the thrush: Misther Hugh this, an' Misther Hugh that, an' Misther Hugh the other."

There was no contradicting this outrageous exaggeration, from off which, however, Hugh took due discount.

"Th'art a leal little lass, th'art for sewer.' Do you remember Mawson's dog?" Hugh said, laughing. "Let us go there," he added impulsively.

"Just one minute to get my hat," May cried delightedly, bounding off, but pulling

up presently to turn and say, "but you'll want some lunch?"

"Bring it with you—the old lunch, mind," shouted Hugh.

Great was the maid's amazement when May insisted on providing herself with apples, biscuits, and raisins for the gentleman's lunch. But May, too breathless with joyous excitement to make any answer to her remonstrances, hurriedly filled a small basket with these provisions, and was rushing headlong with it through the hall, when she was brought suddenly up, near the hall-door, by the entrance of Miss Pim.

"May! Where are you rushing to in this mad way?"

"To Hugh—Mr. Grey. He's come, and we're going for a walk."

"Have you asked your mother?"

"She's out."

"I cannot allow you to go without your father's or mother's permission; certainly not," Miss Pim said decidedly. "Besides, you have your lessons to learn."

"I can learn them this evening, Miss Pim, and I always go with Hugh," May said, almost weeping; "and he wants his lunch," she added, bringing up, as it were, her reserves in her despair.

"He can have his lunch here," Miss Pim said severely, taking the basket from May.

"Please, miss, it's only apples and raisins," said the scandalised maid.

Apples and raisins! Miss Pim had to verify this Arcadian luncheon before she could credit the informer.

"But it's what he asked for, and it's the lunch we always used to have," urged May appealingly.

"I wish you'd try to remember, at least while Mr. Grey is here, that you are not

a baby now," Miss Pim replied, shutting down the basket with a snap and handing it to the maid. "Tell Mr. Grey that lunch will be ready for him presently in the dining-room."

"Yes, miss."

"May I tell him?" pleaded May.

"And that Miss May has her lessons to learn," added Miss Pim to the maid, thereby answering May without deigning to take direct notice of her request.

Meanwhile Con was expatiating to Hugh upon May's merits, and particularly upon that merit of hers which was freshest in his mind—her generosity. He told, with rhetorical fervour and exaggeration, of her smuggling such frequent supplies of tobacco to him, that he had, as a last resource, to assume heart-disease to prevent her wasting all her allowance upon him.

"But afore I knew where I wor, Misther Hugh, she was cryin' her eyes out, 'Oh Con,' she says, 'throw it away; throw it away at onst,' she says between her sobs, an' she pitched the bit of baccy over the wall, an' the pipe an' the matches afther it. 'Do ye feel yere heart now?' she says, wid her face like a lily bate down wid the rain. 'To think that it's killin' ye I've been!' she says. 'Yerra, whisht wid ye, Miss May,' I says, 'killin'!' I says, 'faix I'll dance at yere weddin' yet,' I says, 'a jig with Miss Pim,' I says, to rise a shmile on her—for Miss Pim's a dhragon, begor! but sorra a shmile I could rise on her till I axed, 'An' who's the bridegroom to be, miss? Misther Hugh, I'll be bound now!' Ye should see her thin, Misther Hugh, wid her eyes shinin' till they dhried the tears on her face, like the sun on a red rose in the mornin'. 'Oh Con,' she says, 'I'm so glad he's comin'; an' ye mustn't mind if I niver come next or near ye while he's here, Con, for he can shstay only a week, an' I'd like to be always wid him, if he'll have me,' she says; 'but I'm afraid he'll have forgotten me,' she says, lookin' up at me as solemn as the moon. There isn't her like in this country anyhow," Con concluded with much fervour.

"Nor anywhere else, that I've seen, Con," replied Hugh heartily, in his genial manner.

"See that, now!" cried Con exultingly, "an' he all through Amerikey! Ah, thin, Misther Hugh," he added with deep religious feeling, "ah, thin, Misther Hugh, it's a gran' thing to have the prayers of a

child like that coverin' ye all over in furrin parrts—it is so. An' Maggie tells me she never laves ye out of her little prayers, night or mornin'."

Con rubbed the corner of his eye with his grimy knuckles, for he was exceedingly soft-hearted, and there was a suspicion of moisture in Hugh's eyes also.

"God bless her!" he said.

"Amen," responded Con devoutly.

At this point the maid appeared, saying, "Please, sir, Miss May has to learn her lessons; but lunch will be ready in the dining-room in a few minutes."

"That's Miss Pim," Con said, rather positively than interrogatively.

"Yes," replied the maid, amazed at Con's freedom before the strange gentleman.

"I'll be bound it was," Con said.

"Who is she, Con?" he asked, when the maid had departed.

"It's a new governess we've all got, Misther Hugh," replied Con drily.

"Oh!"

"Faix, it's yourself she'll be larnin' the road to Amerikey soon. She's larnin' Miss May to be a lady!" he added with a sarcastic bitterness which was the highest possible compliment to May.

"I suppose it would be no use trying to rescue her," Hugh said irritably.

"She'll not say 'No' to you, whatever you ax her, I'll go bail," Con answered with a chuckle unintelligible to Hugh.

"I think I'll venture," Hugh said, as much to himself as to Con.

"You've but to ax her, Misther Hugh, an' she'll not only let Miss May go, but she'll go herself wid ye, to take care of yese both."

"I shall not trouble her to do that, Con."

As Hugh walked away towards the house, Con followed him with his eyes, while he leaned upon his spade-handle soliloquising:

"Faith, thin, I wouldn't put it pasht her. She's wan of thim that coorses ivery hare, an' kills none"—not a bad description of a flirt, since the metaphor—suggested by Con's runs with the Clare harriers—refers to the hounds turning aside to course every fresh hare that crosses the trail, so that none is killed at the close of the day.

As far as Hugh was concerned anyway, Con did Miss Pim no injustice, for that young lady lost her facile heart to him at once. Hugh was superbly handsome—in the Hector, not the Paris style—and was

as unconscious of his leonine beauty as heroes of this rugged sort so often are. Having lived for some years among savages, he had that profound respect for the sex which has ceased, at least in our day and country, to be a note of civilisation. Perhaps, respect felt for women by Americans generally, and especially by Americans in out-of-the-way regions, is due in some degree to the sex being at a premium on that continent, whereas in Europe there is a glut in the market. Anyhow, those who have lived in America for some time, and particularly in the American backwoods, recover the old deference of the days of chivalry for women. But, indeed, Hugh was born with it, and would have retained much of it to his life's end, even if he had lived all his days in English society.

On his return to the house he asked to see Miss Pim, and when that lady appeared—after some delay at her toilet—he was most deferential.

"I want you to give May a holiday for a ramble with me, Miss Pim."

"I do not know whether her mother would like it," Miss Pim replied with a shy and winning hesitancy, which showed Hugh that the battle was won.

"But you have no idea what old friends May and I are. I assure you, Miss Pim, that Mrs. Beresford would not have the slightest objection to our taking one of our old rambles together."

"If you will take the responsibility then, Mr. Grey, we shall venture," rejoined Miss Pim, with an engaging smile and a shy, upward look into his face that would have said to a coxcomb, "you are irresistible." To Hugh, however, it said only, "She is very accommodating, hang it!"

Con was right. What on earth was to be done? A ramble with May, plus Miss Pim.

"It can't be helped, I suppose," he said ruefully.

She shook her head.

"It will be like going to church—I mustn't speak unless spoken to, or walk fast, or stop, or turn in my toes, or anything. And you mustn't put your hands in your trousers pockets either," she added to Hugh, with a delightful return to her old dictatorial manner.

Hugh laughed, and suggested that at least they might look round their old haunts about the yard, and where they had kept their pets, while Miss Pim was

arraying herself. For Miss Pim, expecting him to lunch in the house, would probably take some time to get ready.

As they passed through the garden, Con said:

"Didn't I tell you, Misther Hugh, you'd get over her? Faix it's you that 'ud whisltle the burrd off the bough!"

"Oh, but she's coming with us, Con," cried May distressfully.

"I told him that, too," Con rejoined drily.

"We shall be somewhere about the place if she's looking for us, Con."

"Well, miss, I hope she'll find ye," replied Con, with a grin that suggested he'd no more guide Miss Pim to them than he would a process-server to a victim.

When Miss Pim appeared presently, in evident search of them, Con asked:

"Is it Miss May you're looking for, miss?"

"Yes; where are they?"

"I thought you were looking for 'em," Con cried complacently, as having made a sagacious guess; "Miss May she says to me, 'Con,' she says, 'Miss Pim is going to take us for a walk,' she says, 'an' if you see her, you can tell her we'll be somewhere about the village,' she says. 'I will, miss,' I says."

"She had no business," began Miss Pim wrathfully; and then she turned suddenly away, and walked off in hot haste to overtake the runagates.

On Hugh and May's return soon after, through the garden, Con was amazed.

"Ah, thin, Miss May, you're not gone after all?"

"Gone! No; we're waiting for Miss Pim."

"See that now! An' I told her ye were gone. But ye'll aay overtake her, miss, if ye'll take the short cut through Seed Fold."

This was the direct way, not to the village, but to Mawson's.

Hugh strongly suspected Con's ruse, in spite of his perfect acting; but May, not having the least suspicion of it, was in troubled haste to overtake Miss Pim, whose just wrath she dreaded.

As it turned out, however, Con took the entire blame upon himself. He explained with plausible volubility that he had understood May to say, "somewhere about the village," when she had really said, "somewhere about the place;" and that, as he thought they had taken the village only on their way to Mawson's, he also thought

Miss Pim, to overtake them, would make direct for Mawson's by the short cut through Seed Fold.

May and Hugh made breathless haste until it became certain that, if they had been on Miss Pim's track, they would have overtaken her.

"I'm afraid she hasn't come this way," May said at last. "I'm sure she hasn't. She'll be very angry."

"She can't be angry with you. I fancy Con will catch it."

"Do you think we ought to go back, Hugh?"

"Indeed, I do not. Do you think your father and mother would mind your coming here with me?"

"Mind it!" exclaimed May.

"Then Miss Pim may—keep her hair on."

"May what!"

"Leave your hair on, if she pulls it—does she?"

May's dignity was hereby hurt, for she somehow wished to seem grown up more to Hugh than to anyone.

"I'm not such a baby!"

"No; I was always the baby. How stupid you used to think me, and find me, too! Do you remember how long it took you to teach me those verses about the hunt in 'The Lady of the Lake?' I have said them over many hundred times since; and once, when I thought it was all up with me, I couldn't get them or you out of my mind."

May, who was holding his hand after her old habit, pressed her cheek against it—greatly moved. Presently she asked in low and rather tremulous voice: "Was it that time with the bear?"

"No. I was thinking only of the bear then. It was some time after that when I interfered, like an ass, in a row not of my making, and got badly hit, and was given over. Do you know I thought of you more than of any one, little woman, and of our old days, and walks, and talks together; and whether you would mind it much when you heard about it, and think sometimes of me afterwards."

As May remained silent, Hugh glanced down at her and found her crying quietly.

"May dear!" he cried distressed, as he stooped and kissed her with exceeding tenderness.

"Oh, Hugh! Don't go out there again! Stay at home; do stay at home!"

"I'm in for it for a few years more any way, but after that I'll come home for

good. You see, May, I am good for nothing in a civilised community, as your dear old father used to say; but I can hold my own fairly well out there," continued he.

"Indeed, Hugh," she cried with intense earnestness, "father never said that of you. There never was any one he liked so much—never."

"It was because he liked me he said it; and he only said what you have said to me a hundred times yourself—that I was a dunce," Hugh answered, smiling down upon her archly.

"I was horrid, I know. I have often thought of the pert things I used to say to you, and how good you were to me, Hugh, about them, and about everything."

"I hope that new governess is not putting these notions into your head. I should hate you to change in any way. Do you know, May, I was wondering all the way coming home if it was the old May I should see, or another person altogether."

Here the child looked up with so bright a smile, shining through tears which had not yet cleared away, that Hugh added:

"Yes, it's the old May still; but what will it be when I come back in six or seven years? I know. It will be the tips of the fingers, and 'How do you do, Mr. Grey? How changed you are! I should scarcely have known you.'"

At this preposterous picture May laughed delightedly—a laugh which sounded to Hugh like sunlight set to music.

"Oh, well, you may laugh, but you'll be a young lady then of Miss Pim's manufacture."

"Like Miss Pim!" cried May, laughing still more at this climax of the joke; but then she said with sudden seriousness: "Really though, Hugh, you don't think that I could ever be a young lady to you? I mean really," she reiterated incredulously.

"I don't know, or you don't know, what you'll be in six or seven years; but if I thought you would change to me, I shouldn't have the heart then to come and see you at all—or to come back at all, for that matter."

There could now be no doubt of his seriousness.

"Hugh, I could never change to you. I shall always like you better than any one in the world, except father, and Fred, and mamma," she said.

"Th'art a leal little lass," he said only, but in a tone that expressed even to May a world more than the words.

"But, oh, Hugh, I wish you weren't going back there!" she cried wistfully.

"It can't be helped now, May; I'm in for it—for six years, anyhow, when I shall have made my fortune, or lost it."

Six years seeming to May an eternity, she fell into a melancholy silence.

He, too, remained silent for a little, looking down upon her with the pure protecting love of early manhood.

A young man's love, even for a woman of, or near, his own age, is pure in precise proportion to his manliness. Now the angelic purity of such a man's love for a child like May is still more etherealised and intensified by the chivalrous protective instinct, which is as much the ultimate source of a man's pure love for a woman as it is of a woman's love for her child. The clinging, appealing helplessness of the woman, or of the child, addresses itself to the same precise instinct of protective love in the man and in the mother. But when, as in May's case, the girl is also a child, this appeal is intensified in its force when made to a nature so chivalrous as Hugh's. His pure, protective love for his old playmate, nursed through years of absence, burned with a smokeless and intense flame now that he had met and found her all that he had imagined. On her side, May worshipped him with that strange passionate love, which, long before the dawn of passion, children of either sex feel sometimes for their seniors.

Thus they were, Arcadians in Arcadia, really as much in love with one another as though the six years ahead were behind them. But they were in love in a curiously and charmingly unconscious way. When the talk—after wandering back and lingering long upon old days and scenes, 'scapes and scrapes—turned naturally enough upon the present reign of Miss Pim, May cried, almost irritably, "She is so tiresome. I can never say or do anything right all day long. I mustn't climb, or run, or talk to Con, or Sarah, or even about you! I was in disgrace all the morning for saying 'I was so glad you were coming.'"

"But why?" asked Hugh in amaze.

"She said I mustn't talk that way about gentlemen, that it was very unladylike and improper, and all sorts of things."

"You must have said something more than that," Hugh rejoined laughing.

"But I didn't, indeed, Hugh," May urged earnestly. "Maggie was talking about sweethearts—she's always talking

about sweethearts—and she asked me who was mine, and I said 'you were,'—joking, you know—and that you were coming to-day, and that I was so glad; and she told Miss Pim, and I got such a scolding! But when I asked papa about it, he was very angry with her, and called her a dirty broom."

What the Vicar had really muttered was, "Using a stable-broom to sweep a chancel."

BACON AND TRAVEL.

How completely the times have changed since Bacon penned his *Essay on Travel*! I do not mean that our modes of locomotion are different, though what can be in more marked contrast than the slow, anxious passage through county to county on a packhorse or in a lumbering chaise—with, for variety, the inevitable slipping of a shoe or breakage of a wheel in impossible places—and our own famous electrical rush through a dozen counties in the time the packhorse would demand for one! No; the mind of the nation has changed even more than our methods of locomotion, and the solemn injunctions of Lord Bacon to the man whom luck and his own inclinations were sending to the Continent, are now the commonplace instincts of millions where formerly there were tens.

"Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder a part of experience." No doubt it ought to be so, if all things worked to their proper purpose; but who in the world imagines that the tens of thousands of the youths of the various nations, who for a few brief weeks in the year scamper into the countries adjacent to their own country, give a thought to the educative chances that are open to them? The times have changed. We get enough education at home, I suppose; and, therefore, the man who avers that abroad, also, he visits the churches for their architecture; the theatres and concert-halls, that he may weigh foreign art and tones against domestic; the woods and fields, to compare their grasses and cereals with ours; and holds conversation with all the pretty women who come in his way, in order that he may judge of Lavater in the concrete, or improve himself in foreign tongues—such a man, I think, would be regarded as a humbug.

Education is labour; and travel itself is but another word for travail, or much toil. What, then, have education and

travel in the literal sense to do with the pleasure-trips which are the fashion in our age?

Bacon recommends the youth of his century to travel under the escort of "some tutor or grave servant," one who had a certain knowledge of the language of the country, and a personal acquaintance with the things and people best worth seeing on the journey. Conceive the ordinary modern traveller travelling under these excellent conditions. But it would, of course, be impossible; and as for the language, in what would the fun of foreign jaunts consist if the various "contretemps" which proceed from such ignorance were wholly obviated?

Blanco White, in his "Letters from Spain," gives an illustration of this. On first entering London, knowing very little English, he saw the words "Cannon Brewery," on a building at Knightsbridge. "So!" said he to himself. "The verb expressive of the making, or casting, of cannon is here, in England, 'to brew';" and he straightway entered this bit of empirical knowledge in his note-book.

Anon, he drove past Knightsbridge, and got into the region of professional flower gardens, to wit "nurseries." His surprise was great when he had counted four or five of these large-boarded announcements—Nurseries.

"What!" he exclaimed, when the number briskly increased; "surely the English ladies have gone a step beyond the unnatural practice of devolving their first maternal duties upon domestic hirelings. Here, it seems, the poor, helpless infants are sent, to be kept and suckled in crowds in a decent kind of Foundling Hospital."

With a full comprehension of the mysteries of a French menu, one would be spared all those delightful anticipations which are part and parcel of a dinner at the Café Royal or Bignon's. And, with all due reverence for Lord Bacon, one would also lose many acquaintances who, from sheer sympathy and interest, are attracted to us, as they certainly would not have been had we been able to talk the language with never a single ridiculous, and, therefore, laughter-provoking slip of the tongue.

Balzac speaks of the intimacies of travellers as easy and briskly formed, because on both sides there is positive assurance that they will be abruptly and soon ended.

"Every ship is a romantic object, except that we sail in," says pensive Emerson.

But where is the romance of a fellow-traveller if he be able to talk to you as readily as you can talk to him?

This would be an appropriation of the passing vessels, with the result that all their fanciful good qualities would infallibly be proven to be dust and ashes. The imagination must be dandled and coaxed, but seldom gratified.

Pessimists are pessimists simply and solely because they will never trust their poor imaginations for a single moment. The doll must be torn to pieces, be it ever so gay a doll, with ever so fair a colour in its cheeks. It is the same in travelling through countries the language of which you speak to perfection. All their foreign illusions become reasonable and matter-of-fact.

In short, unless you wish to develop into a baneful man of the world, who has struck the word "mystery" from his dictionary and scheme of life, do not become polyglot. Rather, go abroad with a free, simple air, and accept all things for what they seem. In such a case, however, keep your money in an inner pocket, and be ready in case of need to belie your affectation of simplicity.

Lord Bacon says nothing positive about the amenities of conduct that best befit a traveller. He warns the youth that quarrels are "with care and discretion to be avoided;" and that he must beware "how he keepeth company with choleric and quarrelsome persons." But such admonitions were more necessary in Bacon's time than now. Then, every spark in France was an accomplished swordsman and a "roué," to whom a foreign life or two were but so many additional feathers in the cap of his importance.

How different it is now! The Frenchman of quality is now as reserved as then he was free-spoken and free-handed. He was then to be detected at once by the nameless signs of physiognomy, deportment, and manners. Nowadays he is remarkable for his gentlemanly self-obliteration. He is still polite. But in his courtesy, as in all other externals, he is less demonstrative than the most modest of English noblemen. What has he in common with the excited, uncontrolled sightseer, who wonders to all the world what he will see next, what his next dinner will consist of, and whether he will be made to pay at his next hotel more or less than, to his loudly-expressed disgust, he was made to pay at the last? Even Lord Bacon would not have con-

sidered such contact dangerous. The very laws of nature combine to make it impossible for the well-bred man of the world to quarrel with the tourist of the nineteenth century.

Nothing is more gratuitous than the good counsel which is often given to a traveller, as to his behaviour abroad. If he be a traveller of experience, he knows all about it experimentally. If not, he cannot help being foolish, fifty times in the day, in his attempt to act upon such counsel.

*Parole douce, et main au bonnet,
Ne coûte rien, et bon est.*

(Gentle words, hat in hand, cost nothing, and are acceptable.) The saying comes from Henry the Fourth, of France, the merry Henry of Navarre. This King was a terrible libertine, and not wise as a sovereign; yet his subjects adored him, and, like other libertines, he was the pink of courtesy.

This fair saying of Henry of Navarre's may be matched by the Spanish proverb, "*Cortesía de boca mucho vale, y poco cuesta*"—lip courtesy is worth much and costs little. No one who has not been through Iberian lands, and mixed with high and low in them, can have an idea of the importance of this brief maxim. The Spaniards are a gracious people: we cannot compare with them in the matter of civility; but their civility must be met with civility, or it quickly develops into hatred of the most bitter kind, which we all know as the outcome of a mark of contempt. Of course, where this civility goes beyond a certain point, it must be taken at a reasonable valuation only. No one, for example, will construe a Spaniard to the letter when he says, with a bow: "*My house is at your disposition*," These are merely conventional courtesies which signify that the utterer of them has a regard for you, and will gladly give you a glass of wine, or a cup of coffee, and a cigarette, if you call some afternoon, and find him with nothing better on his hands. However, it is well not to be too ready to reciprocate national courtesies in kind. The young Englishman who thought to out-do Spain by offering his watch and chain, suiting the action to the word, to the Spaniard who admired it, had no just grievance when the other took it with a bow and a "*muchas gracias*"—many thanks.

A man ought to act up to the instincts of his birthright. He may be cosmopol-

itan, if he pleases; but with enough of national patois for his identification.

Dr. Kitchener, who wrote on "*Cooks*" and "*Ailments*," and other curious subjects, in his "*Travellers' Oracle*" suggested, and wisely, that "You will everywhere much more readily obtain your wishes, and keep out of danger, by *Patience and Fair Words*, than by *Impatience and opprobrious Language*. Keep your rank among the great, but disdain not to stoop to the peasant, when charity dictates. A respectful and humble carriage is a mighty advantage to gain knowledge; it unlocks the heart of every one." I dare say it does, or rather did, when Dr. Kitchener wrote. But as the acquisition of knowledge is not now one of the purposes of travel, one may better understand why "*respectful and humble carriages*" are not generally characteristic of people who go abroad.

But of all Lord Bacon's advice, none is less obsolete or more adapted for eternity as well as time than this—"Men should make diaries . . . let him carry with him also some cards, or books, describing the country where he travelleth, which will be a good key to his inquiry; let him keep also a diary." This is truly comforting in our age of books of travel and *Boedekers*. Advice, as a rule, is something to be treated with contempt. Naturally, because it implies an inferiority in us to the person who takes it upon himself to advise us. But the diary will never fail. Have I not seen it in active use on some of the famous sites of the world—on the Acropolis of Athens; the field of Marathon; at Waterloo; within the Cathedrals of Saint Paul and Westminster; over the bones of the great Bonaparte; at Washington of the States; on various mountains, such as Snowdon, or the Peak of Teneriffe; among colleges and schools; in courts and private-houses? It is a custom, I suppose, that grows with encouragement. Nor can it be wholly reprobated, although at times it is wholly irritating and obtrusive. It is good for thought, and it is good for commerce. This and this alone, perhaps, constitutes the incidental element of education which modern travel carries with it. The writer is forced to think, and his subject is thus involuntarily retained for a while in his mind.

It were useless to recommend the modern traveller to take his journeys in solitude. "How, then," he might ask in despair, "can I get what I want, or know what I ought to see? Besides, I like to talk, and

I can't talk to foreigners; and—and, I should mope to death." But, for the discipline's sake, it might have done him good. "A man," says Sidney Smith in one of his letters, "can do without his own approbation in much society, but he must make great exertions to gain it when he lives alone; without it, solitude is not to be endured." Zimmermann and others, who have written largely on this fascinating theme, all work towards the same moral. A preacher must not always be expected to practise what he preaches; else one might upbraid Zimmermann for committing suicide in his solitude. We must take sermons and advice in general, and be thankful, without inquiring into the source of their manufacture. The little boy, who finds pleasure in jujubes, would, perhaps, find less pleasure in them did he but know that they are made mainly of gristle and other kinds of animal meat.

Yet I am led to think that this solitary travelling, which is so distasteful in idea to most men, is really a softening of the manners. Do you know what De Stendhal said of the English early in this century? He had seen much of the world, and had both fought with Napoleon in Russia and served in diplomacy at Berlin and elsewhere. "Nothing," he says, "can equal my admiration of the English legislature, unless it be the repulsion I feel towards English society. If you make advances to an Englishman, he avails himself of it to put on a great air of dignity. Timid in society towards every one whom they consider a superior, they are almost insolent towards all who have the air of bending to them; they are the most unsociable of beings; perhaps for that reason the least happy. . . . To be held in consideration by an Englishman, the most perfect air of coldness must be assumed."

Is not this biting? It galls, because it is so true, I am afraid. A man who travels alone reflects on these matters, and is very dull or depraved if he cannot profit by his reflections. An Englishman, "in the abstract," is, I believe, welcome in most parts of Europe; but that nation or people is very long-suffering who approve of the concrete Englishman, as they approve of the "genus" in the abstract. May I be forgiven if I say that we are, with all our innumerable virtues—it is necessary to make a vaunt about them, to gild the pill—diabolically conceited, and rather thick-headed! By no other supposition can I account for our idiocy abroad, and our

reluctance to acknowledge that the merit of foreigners, in "every branch of everything," may be equal to—if it does not surpass—our own merit. One may speak treason for patriotic purposes. Similarly, one may surely say unpleasant things with a good intention.

"Travel" is a large subject. It has countless by-ways of influence as well as of amusement and instruction. And whether we agree with the elder Dumas that "it is with scenery as with men—we must not examine the details if we wish to admire the whole;" or, whether we hold with the "ologists," that it is to the details of life—the birds, beasts, insects, flowers, and so forth—that one must go to fully appreciate the charms of our globe; we may easily contrive that pure pleasure shall be the outcome of our investigations or contemplations.

In conclusion, this I dare affirm: that travel, if it lessens one's belief in the perfectibility of mankind, deepens and vitalises incredibly one's interest and even enthusiasm about the enigmatical destiny of the human race, and makes a man as a factor of good or evil among his fellow men incalculably more potent.

NIDDERDALE AND THE DALERS.

"You wish for a complete change, Dolly? So you must join the great tourist caravanserai, dash across Europe in an express train; climb mountains with a motley crowd of English and third-rate Americans; and rhapsodise over the beauties of nature to the accompaniment of a brass band and negro singers! 'Lo, what fools these women be!'" And my uncle threw himself back in his chair with a sardonic smile, which would have been irritating to an angel, and was simply maddening to two poor mortals, worn out by a vain attempt to arrange a tour, combining the maximum of pleasure with the minimum of expense.

"Perhaps, Uncle Fred, you would advise our going to Margate," observed Dolly, with a delicate sarcasm which was completely wasted upon the thick-skinned individual against whom it was levied.

"You might do worse, my dear. Margate has many advantages, only you would find rooms rather expensive there; still, you might do worse. I thought, though, that you were resolved to eschew watering-places, and go up some river!"

Now this was positively cruel: for months past we had been dreaming of an expedition up the Danube, and it was only lack of means that had forced us to relinquish our project.

There was a long pause, and then Uncle Fred started up as if struck with a sudden idea.

"Now, girls, I have it; you wish to explore a river, why not go up the Nidd? You wish 'to shake off the fetters of an effete civilisation.' I'll promise that you will find no fetters in Nidderdale."

At first we hung back: who had ever heard of the Nidd? But it was impossible to resist my uncle's enthusiasm. Some forty years before, he had been with a shooting-party into Nidderdale; and, from the pensive look that came over his face when he spoke of those days, we had always decided that he had met there some fair Daler who had helped him to while away the dulness of the long evenings; but, although he spoke vaguely of people who had been kind to him, and declared that the month he had spent in Nidderdale had been the happiest in his life, beyond that he would tell us nothing. He was evidently resolved that we should go. Each difficulty as it arose he combated so vigorously that, in the end, he succeeded in inspiring us with an ardour equal to his own; still we were considerably disappointed when we found that no arguments or persuasions would induce him to accompany us. "No, no," was all he would say; "it is all very well for you, but Nidderdale is no place for worn-out digestions or one-legged men"—he had lost a leg in the Crimea—so we were obliged to start alone.

Following my uncle's directions, we made our way through Craven to Pateley Bridge, where, when we arrived, we found a steady rain falling, and the valley enveloped in a mist so dense that we could not see a dozen yards in front of us. The prospect was not cheering, and I would fain have stayed for finer weather before continuing our journey; but we had arranged to make Middlesmoor our first halting-place, and Dolly, scouting the idea of experienced travellers being delayed by a shower of rain, insisted upon engaging an old broken-down fly—the only one that could be found—the owner of which promised to take us as far as possible in the direction of Middlesmoor.

He smiled when I asked him why he would not drive us the whole way. "Loike that would be hard to fettle," he observed with a look of infinite amusement at my

simplicity; but, in spite of this hint, we started, for Dolly held it as a prime necessity for a successful tour never to consider the future.

The farther we advanced into the valley the heavier became the rain, the thicker the mist. The houses—if there were any—we could not distinguish from trees, the trees from sheep; but still the old chaise rattled on for hour after hour, and we never met a soul. Evidently Nidderdale, whatever might be its charms, was not a much-frequented region.

But all things must have an end. I was just composing myself for a delicious sleep, when an imperative voice called out: "Hey, ye mun turn out 'ere." Turn out into the drenching rain and thick darkness! In vain we entreated, expostulated, threatened; the old man stood there with dogged obstinacy imprinted on every line of his face. Come out of the chaise we must. Once out, however, his brow cleared, and he declared his intention of accompanying us on our way.

The reason of his refusal to drive us further was soon made clear. There was no road leading to the town we had fixed upon as our head-quarters. The only approach was a rough, ill-defined foot-path, up which, perchance, a donkey might amble; but as for driving a carriage there, you might as well have tried to fly. The wind was so strong that it drove us back; the rain ran down our faces and blinded us; and we stumbled and fell from stone to stone as we climbed up the side of a high, steep rock. Oh, how I wished myself back in the regions of railroads and omnibuses!

At length, just as we were all at the end of our strength, we espied a solitary light burning in the distance. It was scarcely nine o'clock; but not another was to be seen in the village; and a few minutes more found us safely housed in the little inn, with the landlady, her husband, and her daughters standing around us, calling out in chorus:

"Weal, we ne'er thought ye'd come in t' middle o' t' night!"

The next morning, when we awoke, the sun had already driven away all signs of the gloom of the previous night; the sky was without a cloud, and the great hills lay stretched around us in all their majesty. We wandered out through the little village, with its dark stone houses as closely pressed together in tiny rows as if in the centre of a great manufacturing town. It was a desolate spot: not a fruit tree, not

a flower; scarcely a leaf was to be seen. The church, built in the fourteenth century, was of the same dark stone as the houses, and, though bare and hard, it seemed to harmonise with its surroundings. Surely it must have been in villages like this that the stern Puritans of the early ages found their dwellings.

Middlesmoor stands on the summit of a bleak, barren hill, which runs up the centre of the Dale to within some four or five miles of the end, dividing it into two lesser valleys. At the head are the three Whernsides, the highest of which, the Great Whernside, is dark and gloomy, as if under the spell of a curse shutting it out from all sunshine and light. Let the sun be where it may, its rays never fall on this mountain, which seems to cast a sinister shadow over the Dale, so lowering is its aspect. Little Whernside and its fellow are less forbidding, though all the three are barren and dreary. The Coverdale, Wensleydale, and Craven Hills run at right angles to the Whernside range, and form the right and left boundaries of the Dale. These are lovely hills, rising and falling with gentle, well-rounded curves; the upper part covered with the delicate green of pasture, which becomes greyer and more scanty as you mount until you reach the summit, which is clothed with the purple splendour of heather and ling. The heather on these hills is quite different from that which grows on the lowlands. It seems to be of a thousand varying shades and colours, from the palest grey to the darkest purple. It never appears for two instants the same, but changes with every passing cloud and breeze; no wonder that it is the despair of all artists who attempt to paint it.

The sides of the hills are divided by hedges into fields so small in size, and eccentric in form, that they would drive a political economist wild; that they can be cultivated seems little short of a miracle. There is little wood farther up the valley than Pateley; two or three small oak plantations, and a few clumps of larches form the whole of the trees. Still, as we stood in the little churchyard at Middlesmoor, and looked up the valley, we were forced to confess that Uncle Fred was right; Nidderdale is beautiful, though its beauty is of a strange, weird kind that I have never seen elsewhere, for, as if to throw into stronger contrast the gloom of the Great Whernside, the Nidd, most elfish and skittish of streams, darts out of the mountain side, and begins its capricious

career with a contemptuous curl of scorn at its dark parent. It flickers, and springs, and darts, and jumps in the wildest manner; collecting in its course other streamlets as untamed as itself, and then, just as it is becoming important enough to take its place as a respectable well-ordered river, it darts underground, and is seen no more for nearly three miles. The effect of this phenomenon is the more startling because, as if to deceive observers, it goes along with an admirable steadiness and propriety for some little time before it begins its subterranean course. It enters the hollow base of a solid rock some twenty feet in height, hanging over the chasm, which goes by the name of Goydon Pot-Hole. There are several huge detached blocks of stone lying about the mouth of the cavern, and, as these somewhat impede the entrance of the stream, it lifts itself up, and, as if lashed into fury at their impertinent interference, it raises itself, and springs upon them foaming, and hissing, and assuming a terrific appearance in its anger. If it be a dry season, the river only flows at one side of the cave, and then, at the cost of a thorough wetting and a splitting headache, you may accompany it some short distance on its course. An old goose is said to have gone the whole way, and to have come out safe and sound where the Nidd condescends again to become a terrestrial river, some half-a-mile beyond Lofthouse. The Dalers are immensely proud of the Nidd and its freaks; one of them, an old farmer, once said to me enquiringly: "Happen in t'parts ye cum fra t'watter stays above t'grund?" And when I was forced to confess that such was the case, his sniff of scorn for "sic loike parts" was inimitable.

As if to compensate for the disappearance of the Nidd, during the time it is underground, one of its tributaries, the Stean, assumes an unexpected importance. Judged by the volume of its water, it is a mere streamlet, and yet, in some mysterious way, it contrives to impress you with the idea that it is an important river. Perhaps this is, in some measure, owing to its position. By one of those freaks which Nature, in chalk districts, delights to indulge in, quite suddenly, in the midst of the valley, there rises a high rock, through the centre of which runs a fissure, sometimes fifty yards wide, at others so narrow that you can step across it. This fissure forms the bed of the Stean. The sides of the rock are covered with the most exquisite verdure, ferns, lichens, and wild

flowers of every description, which are thrown into brilliant relief by the sharp stony peaks that, from time to time, pierce through them. Along the sides of the stream are caverns, through which, if only you have the courage, you may make your way to Goydon Pot-Hole, about a mile distant. One of the peculiarities of these caves is, that they are arranged in two storeys, one above the other, and in some cases have quite the appearance of rooms hollowed out of the rock. Can these be the unaided work of Nature, or must we indeed give credence to the legends that Nidderdale was one of the homes of the cavern-dwellers?

From Lofthouse, the Nidd flows on its way with many graceful curves, passes through the little hamlet of Ramsgill, the birthplace of Eugene Aram. We were amused to find that, in Nidderdale, quite a different version of Eugene Aram's tragic tale prevails to that given either by the novelist or the poet. The people of Ramsgill, as they point out the house in which he was born, never fail to inform you that he was a much injured man, who, innocent of all crime, fell a victim to the machinations of the true murderers, and paid the penalty of their crime. Nowhere is the valley of the Nidd more beautiful than between Ramsgill and Pateley Bridge: there the grim Whernsides are hidden from view, the pastures are rich, the foliage luxuriant, and fruit, and flowers—things unknown in the upper part of the dale—reappear. Pateley, dear, sleepy, little town that it is, seems admirably suited to its surroundings. Its inhabitants think themselves quite fashionable—miles in advance of the true Dalers, who live a few hours' walk away. On and on goes the Nidd, sometimes dashing, sometimes crawling, past Raven's Gill—one of the sweetest nooks Nature ever made—on to the far-famed Brimham Rocks, and then to Ripley Castle, the home of the Ingilbys. It was here that Cromwell, with a company of his Ironsides, came to pass the night, after Marston Moor had been fought and won. They came with no signs of joy or triumph; stern, hard men of war as they were, their hearts were bowed in grief, for their leader, that day, had rendered his due to the gods—young Oliver, his nephew, whom he loved as a son, lay dead, slain in the battle; and the great Oliver, as he mourned, thought the victory dear at such a price.

The Lady Ingilby, stern and silent as themselves, with two great pistols in her

girdle, stood in the hall to receive them. At a sign her domestics showed the soldiers where they might retire, whilst she led the way to the great hall, where she and Cromwell sat watching each other in silent anger the whole night long, both, perhaps, brooding on the lost ones whom this cruel war had cost them. The next morning, as they started on their way, Cromwell, with rough sarcasm, bade his hostess compare the conduct of his soldiers with that of her Cavalier friends, and remember that the castle and its inmate had suffered no wrong from his party. The lady, nothing daunted, drew out her pistols, and with a significant smile, remarked that it was well for him and his that it was so.

Then on goes the Nidd to Knarborough, most wicked of wicked little towns, and the favourite hunting-ground of Scotland-yard agents, when any chance criminal is missing. Its wickedness, however, detracts not one iota from its charm. Perched high on the top of a rock which rises almost sheer from the banks of the river, with great tall houses, and narrow winding streets, Knarborough resembles more one of those old fortified German burghs than a Yorkshire town. The castle, now a ruin, but once a strong fort that overawed the neighbourhood, helps to strengthen this impression. The place is full of delightful reminiscences of the past. Of course, there is one of Robin Hood's caves, and, what is still more interesting, a little room hewn out of the rock, in which Mother Shipton lived and composed her prophetic rhymes.

By this time the Nidd has left off its old elfish tricks, and continues its course with a dignity worthy of its age. On it goes past the Plumpton Rocks—great masses of limestone that stand here like giants with outstretched necks and arms, and present an insoluble problem to geologists, alike on account of their form and position. The river skirts past Marston Moor—perhaps, on that day, more than two centuries ago, Cavaliers and Roundheads, side by side, washed their wounds in its waters. Is it the remembrance of what it witnessed then that makes it, from that point, wend its way so sadly? There is something strangely human in this little river; in its frolicsome youth, with all its quirks and pranks; in the vigour of its prime; and, more than all, in the piteous sadness with which it drags out its later course, and falls mournfully into the Ouse. When we

saw it become absorbed into the greater stream, it was as if we had lost a friend.

Nor did we find the Dalers less interesting than their Dale; they are a race apart, distinct from any people I ever met elsewhere. An old legend is handed down by the natives that, before the Roman invasion, Nidderdale was inhabited by a Keltic tribe, the Brigantes, who worked the tin mines. The Romans came and settled amongst them, and liked their quarters so well that, when the legions were withdrawn that they might defend their own country, those who were stationed in Nidderdale hid in the caves until their countrymen were safely out of the country.

If the legend be true, it accounts for some of the peculiarities of the Dalers, as those of the present day would be the descendants of the mingled Keltic and Roman races. Perhaps it is to this fact that they owe their shapely noses; from first to last, I never saw a native of Nidderdale, man, woman, or child, who had not a clearly-cut well-formed nose; for, be the reason what it may, the flabby, nondescript noses that characterise the English people are things unknown in this district. The Nidderdalers are a comely race, with a quiet, innate dignity of their own, which is singularly attractive. Their manners, too, are perfect—simple and sincere, but softened with the truest friendliness. No Roman matron, in her stately villa, ever received her guests with more calm self-possession than these farmers' wives welcome chance visitors.

Their hospitality is unbounded; no matter at what door you may knock—though it be only to make some chance enquiry—you are at once invited to enter, and the moment you have crossed the threshold, you become the honoured guest, the friend of the family; for no Arab chief could hold more firmly to the creed that the rights of strangers are unlimited, than they. If a meal be in progress, you are invited to partake of it; if not, oat-cake and milk are at once produced.

This hospitality of the Dalers once led to a strange encounter. It was the last day of our stay in the upper valley. We had gone out early, and had been wandering about for some hours upon the moors. In our search for ferns and mosses we had wandered far from Middlesmoor, and although we could still see the little hamlet standing out cold and bare from the top of its barren hill, yet it looked so many miles away, that our hearts sank at the thought

of returning there without bite or sup. Fortunately, we descried a farm-house, standing on a hill-side, about a quarter of a mile away. A more desolate spot for building a house I never saw, and the house was as desolate as its situation. A square, ugly building: the architect had evidently been told he must design a shelter, firm and strong, able to withstand rain, wind, and snow, and that there his duty ended. The house was well-built and substantial, but so grim and grey, that the most hardy lichen refused to cling to its surface, the most heroic bird to build on its roof.

We were at once taken into the great stone-floored kitchen, where a peat fire, welcome and beautiful in spite of the September sun, was casting its thousand sparks and flickers in the air. The farmer and his wife advanced and bade us welcome. He was a tall, finely-formed man, who, in spite of his seventy years, held himself as erect as a Guardaman. His manner was grave, almost solemn; but that detracted nothing from the heartiness of his greeting. His wife and sister were not less friendly than he, and in a few minutes we were all sitting around the farmer's hospitable board.

Dinner over, the real business of conversation began. The Dalers are utterly free from any touch of that ultra-refinement that prohibits the asking of questions. On the contrary, they would think they had failed in the primary duty of a host if they had neglected to inform themselves concerning the comings and goings of their guests. It is easy for people, who are seeing strangers every day of their lives, to pass them by uncared for; but in these lonely regions, where a newspaper is never seen until well worn with age, and where the postman's visits are few and far between, passers-by are too rare a luxury to be slighted. When the table was cleared, the farmer sat down with the evident intention of learning something of the outside world. Many were the questions that were asked, personal and relative; but it was impossible to take offence, the real friendly interest of the questioner was too apparent.

At length, after an elaborate description of all we had seen, and an explanation of our reasons for visiting the Dale, the farmer fixed his eyes upon us with a curious expression of blended amazement and reproach, as he said:

"An' ye be nobbut coom 'ere to look about ye?"

It was the truth ; what could we say ! An intuitive knowledge of what was passing through his mind prompted me to say :

"A poor sort of life ours, isn't it !"

If I expected Farmer Verity to contradict me, I showed my ignorance of his character. He looked at me fixedly for a moment, as John Knox might have looked at some fickle worldling, then, shaking his head more in sorrow than in anger, he said sternly :

"Ye be right. It's nobbut a poor soart o' loife, to pass yer time a lookin' about ye."

He seemed quite relieved when we explained that it was only for one month in the year that we followed this deplorable course ; though, more than once, I heard him repeat to himself :

"A whole month every year !"

Just as we were leaving, the farmer's sister crossed over to my side, and, after scanning my features carefully, inquired :

"What might be yer name !"

Until that moment all my attention had been fixed upon the farmer and his wife ; and now I was startled to find what a noble face it was that was peering into mine. Too stern, perhaps, for feminine beauty, it might have been the face of a Grecian god, so perfect was the short upper lip, the delicately-formed nose, and the curve of the low, full brow, around which soft white hair fell in graceful waves. The eyes, large and dark, were sunken and weary, as if with much weeping. It was proud and hard ; not the face of a happy woman ; but when young it must have been beautiful as a dream.

"What might be yer name !" she repeated.

"Annie Carmichael."

Old woman though she was, a bright flush spread over her cheeks, and her lips trembled with suppressed emotion.

"Did ye say Annie Carmichael !" called out the old farmer. "Now, happen thirty or forty years ago, a smart young chap, a sort o' officer—do ye moind, Mary ! Ye kened him, too."

"Na, na, John ; it's na loikly."

But she laid her hand on my shoulder and looked eagerly into my face.

"My Uncle Fred, Major Carmichael, was here," I began. There was no need to add another word. The delight of the farmer and his wife was unbounded ; I thought they would never tire of shaking us by the hand. "To think that ye be

Fred Carmichael's nieces and we didn't know it ! And ye so like him, too, now isn't she, Mary !"

But Mary was standing, white and motionless, her eyes fixed with a far-off, absent look out of the window. Was she thinking of that time, forty years before ! Had it been the happiest time she, too, had known ! Was it for the sake of that Southern lad that Mary Verity, the Nidderdale beauty, was Mary Verity still ! In sooth, one never knows ; constancy and all sorts of old-fashioned virtues linger on up in the Dales. Just as we were going, she drew me towards her, and kissing me solemnly on the brow, she said, in a tone in which sternness and tenderness were strangely blended : "Ye can tell Fred Carmichael that Mary Verity has na forgotten him—na, and never will."

My uncle, too, has never married. She smiled when I told her so.

FRENCH CORSAIRS.

THE French are very proud of their corsairs—sea-wolves is their pet-name for them. Jean Bart is the hero of Dunkirk ; and all along the north coast his name is a favourite one for barques ; indeed, even the French navy has seldom been without a ship christened after him. His townspeople are very proud that, plebeian though he was, he rose to the rank of Commodore and Commandant of His Majesty's ships all along the coast of Flanders. Jacques Cassard has his statue in front of the Bourse at Nantes, as Duguay-Trouin has his in the Place at Saint Malo. And there are many more whose exploits are unknown, and whose names, if known, are mere names in England. It is so on land as well. Each nation remembers its victories, and forgets its defeats. Walk through the Versailles picture-gallery, and you will see scores of battles of which our school histories, at any rate, tell us nothing. What wonder, then, that the running fight of the "Guêpe" against three seventy-four guns, and two fifty-gun frigates, when she kept them at bay till her Captain and twenty-five of her seventy-two men were killed, many of the rest being so badly wounded that the English boarders had to strike her flag for her, is talked of by French sailors, but never mentioned by an Englishman ; and that Thurot's exploits are in France cherished as heroic, though the Captains of the three ships that at last captured his

one, got the thanks of the Irish Parliament for annihilating the pirate!

The French navy is a somewhat modern creation. Gurs dates, like other good things, from Alfred; but, though Louis the Ninth tried hard to take his troops to the Crusades in French bottoms, even he had to hire from Italy. Charles the Fifth, however, had a decent fleet, Norman, Breton, and Castilian, which won a great victory over us at Rochelle. Under his successor, this fleet was to have landed a large army in England; but storms, which helped us so notably against the Armada, and afterwards against Hoche's armament, almost wholly destroyed it. Francis the First played at ship-building. The Duchess Ann of Brittany had the "Belle Cordelière," and he matched it with the "Caraquon," rivals of our "Big Harry;" but the former was sunk by our ships, and the latter burnt. Then the French navy went down again; and when Richelieu was blockading us in Rochelle, he had to hire his ships from the Dutch.

Richelieu felt this deeply, and worked hard at improving the navy; but Colbert is its real founder; and he, moreover, gave a great impulse to privateering. His maxim was: "Commerce is wealth, and wealth the sinews of war;" and by issuing letters of marque to daring sailors, he aimed at crippling our commerce, and (if Captain Norman's figures are right) so far succeeded that, from his time onward, for every French trader taken by us, the French have taken eight of ours.

Jean Bart, one of his most useful corsairs, was born at Dunkirk in 1650, while the town, which was then a bone of contention between French, Spanish, and English, was in French hands. He came of a privateering stock. In a desperate fight with a Dutch squadron, his mother's father, Michel Jacobsen, had fired the powder magazine, blowing up himself and the boarding party, which had almost captured his little vessel. Only two of his crew escaped, one being Luc Bart, Jean's father's father. Naturally, young Bart took to the sea, embarking with Valbué, a brave but very brutal man; his mother sending Sauret, his father's boatswain, to teach and take care of him. His first introduction was rather disheartening. Among his ship-mates was a Huguenot, Lanoix, whom the rest, Valbué especially, were always teasing on account of his religion. One day Valbué flung a can at his head; the Huguenot appealed to "the judgments of

Oleron"—the corsair code, of "eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" severity.

"Master, the judgments say that the Captain should treat his crew fairly and be just in his dealings."

"You lay down the law, dog of a heretic! Take that," shouted Valbué, flinging a marlin spike at the speaker.

Lanoix retorted; there was a row, in which he stabbed the first man who tried to pinion him, and wounded Valbué in the right arm. The "Oleron Code" was carried out on the poor fellow: his arm was gashed, and then, despite the protest of Bart and Sauret, he was bound to the dead man's body and flung into the sea.

This horrible scene made Bart determine, if he ever got the power, to improve the state of corsair law; and, to the poor Huguenot's murder is directly due the Code Maritime, which put corsairs under the ordinary naval rules.

Their material interests, too, were cared for. A fatal duel, in which Thurot bound up the wound of the survivor, led to the edict that any crew of eighteen men and over must have a surgeon on board; while the "Inscription," which bound all French sailors to serve on the King's ships in case of need, provided them, in return for a small yearly subscription, with a pension for themselves and their families.

Well, Bart too did not lose by the part he took in protesting against Valbué's brutality. The Sieur de Imfreville, Naval Intendant at Calais, to whom the murder was reported, asked him if he would like to convey the Marquis d'Harcourt and some other French noblemen on board De Ruyter's ship. They were anxious to see the fight that was to come off between him and Monk, as soon as the wind allowed the latter to get out from Queenborough. Bart, overjoyed at the idea of meeting a real Admiral, gladly accepted the task; and, anxious to make a good impression on De Ruyter, he took the sea-sick courtiers, helpless as they were, in his half-decked boat, up within sight of Monk's fleet, the number and armament of which he leisurely counted, and then dropped down with the ebb till he came alongside the "Seven Provinces," with its gilded poop, huge bronze lanterns, and Admiral's flag flying from the top-gallant. With the officer of watch, Bart was off-handed enough. "Passengers from Calais sent by the Intendant," was his way of introducing the courtiers. But before De Ruyter all his coolness vanished. Falling at the Admiral's feet

he begged to be allowed to serve on his ship. This was in 1666; eight years earlier he had won Colbert's prize for artillery practice, and had the certificate in his pocket. De Ruyter needed no other recommendation. He at once shipped Bart (and at his entreaty, Sauret also) on the "Seven Provinces"; and in the fights with Monk, Bart so far justified his opinion that when in 1672 Louis declared war against Holland, the young seaman was tempted by offers of high perment to remain under the Dutch flag. Patriotism prevailed; and he gave up his promising position for that of seaman on a Dunkirk corsair. In two years he got a ship of his own, a little "chasse-marée," with two guns and thirty-six men. With this he captured six prizes, containing something of all sorts, from Spanish wine to five hundred pairs of English knitted stockings. So the Dunkirk merchants, whose ventures these corsairs were, promoted him in the autumn to a ten-gun brigantine, and, before the winter, he had brought in four more Dutchmen; while, next year, he took his first war-ship, a twelve-gun brig, conveying a timber fleet from Norway.

For five years this sort of work went on, varied only by remonstrances from the French Admiralty, whose hard-and-fast rule was that all prizes should be brought into port, and handed over to the authorities; whereas Bart often very sensibly ransomed ships whose Captains could give good security, instead of wasting time in coming home and risking capture by weakening his own crew in order to man his prizes. In one case the crews of his seventeen prizes exceeded two hundred and fifty, and they would undoubtedly have risen and recaptured their ships had not Bart, by ransom, got rid of nearly two hundred of them. Bart's tactics were simple: as soon as he got within reach of a merchant fleet he would lay his ship alongside the conveying war-ship, while his little consort overhauled the merchantmen. The next move was to board at the head of his best men, while his guns crippled the enemy, and marksmen up aloft harassed them with musketry. Some of his boarding exploits were astonishing; for one in which, with his little frigate of twenty-four guns he captured a Dutch man-of-war, he received a gold chain from Colbert. His great exploit, however, while in what we may call "the uncovenanted service," was the capture of the frigate "Sherdam," which made such a desperate defence (only haul-

ing down her flag when fifty-seven of her ninety-four men were killed) that his own ship was with great difficulty brought into port.

This gallant fight enabled Colbert to put pressure on the King, and to get for Bart a commission as Lieutenant in the navy. For some time he was employed against the Barbary pirates; but in 1689, France being at war with every state in Europe, he again fell foul of the Dutch, capturing, after a desperate fight, the "Seahorse," a frigate double his own size, which had vainly tried to play off on him his boarding trick. While bearing up for Boulogne with the "Seahorse" and nine of the ships which she was convoying, he fell in with an English cruiser, which boarded him before he could fire a shot. The English were swept back and their own ship boarded in return, and for an hour this to-and-fro work went on, till the better gunnery of the French prevailed, and the cruiser was sunk, nearly carrying down with her Bart's ship, much crippled with the two engagements.

Bart was only a Lieutenant, though commanding the bigger of the two little ships, the other being in command of Captain de Guermont, who was content to let Bart manage everything. Next voyage, however, he got a very different kind of Captain, the Chevalier de Forbin, brave and daring as Bart himself, but full of that scorn for "the lower orders," which the French noblesse have generally shown in the most galling way. "What has this riff-raff of little seaport towns got to do with commanding H.M. ships?" such men were always asking; for the navy, even more than the army, was an aristocratic preserve. And they were always carping at Colbert, himself, only a "roturier," or at most one of the "noblesse de robe," for giving commissions to low-born adventurers. Colbert had a hard time of it all round; for Louis, though not so blind to plebeian merit as the Dancans, and Molnerie Miniacs, and Forbins, and other Breton and Gascon lordlings, was so wrapped up in his army that he could hardly be got to give time or money to keeping a fleet together, much less to working steadily for that maritime supremacy which was his Prime Minister's pet project. But, though Forbin, in his memoirs, treats Bart most unfairly, assigning all the glory to himself, they did what Frenchmen have not always done—worked well together in the face of the enemy. He and Bart, for instance, while convoying thirty merchant

ships from Havre to Brest were attacked by the "Nonsuch" and another English frigate, far outweighing them in metal and outnumbering them in crews. They made such good fight that the thirty got safely into port, and that when Bart's ship struck, every officer on the "Nonsuch" was killed or wounded, and the boatswain received Bart's sword. Forbin and Bart, both badly wounded, were taken into Plymouth, whence, by bribing a Flemish doctor, and making a rope of their bed-clothes, they escaped, crossing to St. Malo in an open boat.

Bart's next exploit was to capture the "Rose of the Sea," with four hundred and fifty of William's troops on board; and, soon after, he greatly helped de Tourville in his barren victory off Beachy Head, though he is not even named in that noble Admiral's dispatches. Bart writhed under the Admiral's superciliousness, and made a strong appeal for a whole squadron of swift-sailing crafts under picked commanders, specially commissioned to destroy the Dutch and English commerce. At last, Pontchartrain, the new Minister of Marine, broke through the aristocratic traditions, and put Bart in command of quite a flotilla.

Benbow was blockading Dunkirk; but Bart gave him the slip, and began by snapping up four English merchantmen and a fifty-four-gun frigate, along with a lot of Dutch crafts. His eight hundred prisoners he landed in Scotland; and then put Forbin—who had consented to serve under him—ashore at Tynemouth, to plunder till our people had collected a strong force. Forbin managed the re-embarking so cleverly as to lose only one man. The booty was immense—over a hundred thousand pounds and the captured ships; and Patoulet, the Intendant of Dunkirk, choosing to imagine that Bart had appropriated some of it, sent an Admiralty agent on board his ship, to see that the ransoms were duly accounted for. But Bart had a temper, and put the agent in irons. Of course he was sent for to answer for himself at Versailles, where his transparent honesty so struck both King and Minister, that the former said to him at a levée:

"Jean Bart, would to God I had ten thousand like you!"

"I'm sure I wish your Majesty had," replied the simple-minded sailor.*

* His fame had gone before him. On reaching Versailles, as it was too early to see the King, he began smoking in the antechamber. "You

As they were parting, the King gave him an order for a thousand crowns on M. Pierre Gruin, of the Treasury. When he called, Gruin, who was dining with some friends, read the order, dropped it in handing it back, and said:

"Call again the day after to-morrow."

"No such thing," retorted Bart; "I can't waste time among landlubbers here. So just pick up that paper and pay at once," and he put his hand significantly to his cutlass.

"That's Jean Bart," put in one of the guests; "he's not a man to joke with."

So the Treasury clerk picked up the order, took Bart into his office, and began weighing his bags of silver.

"I'm not a mule; I must have it in gold," said Bart; and he got it too.

Having shared in the defeat of La Hogue; having helped Tourville to capture our Smyrna fleet off Cape Saint Vincent; having beaten successively two Dutch Admirals, and thereby rescuing two fleets of corn-ships, of which France was sorely in need; having defended Dunkirk against an English bombardment; Bart at last, when only fifty-two years old, died of a pleurisy, caught while working hard to get his squadron in order for the war which followed the short peace of Ryswick. Under our milder doctoring he would probably have recovered; but cupping and blistering were then the rule, and he was killed "*secundum artem*."

The story that, in the midst of a desperate fight, he had his son of fourteen lashed to the mast while the round shot whizzed by, "that he might get used to that kind of music," is probably apocryphal. Anyhow, Bart was a man of whom any nation might be proud.

Cassard, the hero of Nantes, never wrote a word about himself. We are, therefore, in the dark about his early career; but it must have been famous, or de Pointis would not have chosen him at twenty-five (1697), to command a bomb-ship in the expedition to Carthage.

De Pointis, aided by twelve hundred West Indian filibusters under du Casse, drove the Spanish from fort to fort, and at last the citadel surrendered, leaving the city to its fate. That fate was

mustn't do that," said a chamberlain. "It's a habit I got in His Majesty's service, and I shall go on till he stops me," was the reply. Word was brought to Louis that a sailor insisted on smoking in the palace. "Why, it must be Jean Bart!" cried the King. "Bring him in;" and he greeted the brave man with the words: "Jean Bart, you're the only man to whom I give leave to smoke in my house. Don't let any of your friends try it on."

as bad as what befell Badajoz during the Peninsular War, or Irun during the first Carlist War. De Pointis was powerless; he and du Casse had been quarrelling, and the latter would not interfere. At last Cassard got together three hundred of his Breton countrymen, swept the streets, searched the houses, and, after hard fighting, brought back the filibusters to something like discipline. Cassard's behaviour so struck de Pointis that he strongly recommended him for a commission; but class prejudices were too strong, and the brave Nantais had to be content with a corsair, fitted out by Nantes merchants. In his first cruise he captured an English brig and three merchantmen, and so, at last, won his Lieutenant's epaulette, the King giving him two thousand pounds to enable him to maintain the position.

For some time, however, he did nothing but corsairing, haunting the Irish coast, and, by running up false colours, inveigling traders within gunshot. At last he fell in with a big Dutch frigate, for whose nine-pounders his eight little guns—the heaviest a three-pounder—were no match. Cassard, however, determined to board; cleverly threw his ship into the Dutchman's forechains, and dashed on board, while his three-pounders swept the enemy's deck with chain-shot, and six of his Bretons seized a Dutch gun, and running it inboard, fired at short range into the crowd. A second round from this gun decided the day, for, of one hundred and thirteen Dutchmen thirty-seven were dead, and fifty-one badly wounded.

Again, France in 1709 was in danger of famine; and the Marseilles merchants persuaded Cassard to fit out at his own cost two ships to convoy the Mediterranean corn-fleet. The English fleet was on the watch; but Cassard managed to evade it, sending the corn-ships home with his consort, and himself keeping up a running fight with the English, under whose sterns he managed to escape, badly hulled, into *Porta Farina*. Here the Tunis pirates helped him to refit; and on his way back he picked up a couple of English prizes; but the unscrupulous Marseilles men refused to stand by their agreement, because Cassard had not himself brought in the corn-ships; and when he appealed to Court after Court, they managed to influence the judges. Cassard thus lost ten thousand pounds for having saved Marseilles from famine and filled the pockets of her knavish speculators.

Next year the Government set him to do the very same work—to convoy the corn-ships from Syracuse. Again he evaded the blockading fleet, attacking the ships which were left to watch while the rest went to Port Mahon for water. After a furious fight he took the "Pembroke" and "Falcon," and brought off the corn-ships.

He then formed and carried out a plan for capturing the Cape Verde Islands, which gave him little trouble, and much treasure; and next (1712) attacked Surinam, which paid a ransom of three hundred thousand pounds, and fifteen thousand hogsheads of sugar. Montserrat, Antigua, Berbice, Essequibo, and Curaçoa next fell into his hands, the capture of the last being a very difficult task. This done, he sailed for Martinique, only to find that his enemies had got him superseded, and that the fleet was ordered home under the command of a noble Lord. On their way they sighted an English squadron. The French Commander signalled: "Keep out of the way;" but Cassard, saying, "My duty to my King overrides that to my Admiral," bore down, signalling to his comrades to follow. A partial engagement lasted till nightfall, Cassard capturing two small English ships. The Admiral, of course, made a strong charge against his subaltern, and Cassard was summoned to Versailles; but Louis the Fourteenth was near his end, and the courtiers had it their own way. Honest bluntness was now at a discount; and Cassard, too, was shyer than Bart, and had been soured by the cheating of the Marseilles. He was accused, too, of having secreted part of the West Indian spoils, and, on this pretext, was left out in the distribution, and thrown on the world penniless. Naturally, under the Regency, such a man would have no chance. For years he hung about Versailles—as many a poor Cavalier did about Saint James's after the Restoration—a broken-down man in shabby "capitaine de vaisseau's" uniform, with many scars, and the Star of Saint Louis. At last he button-holed Cardinal Fleury, and was pouring into his ear the tale of his wrongs, when the Cardinal rudely pushed him aside, and Cassard, in a moment of anger, retorted with wild words. That night he was arrested and lodged in the fortress of Ham, where he died in 1740. This much-wronged man is said to have brought seven millions sterling into the treasury at Martinique.

Duguay Trouin, of Saint Malo, was born

in 1673, a year after Cassard. He was to have been a priest; but when his clerical teacher tried to chastise him, he broke his head with his own ruler; and thenceforth he was left free to follow the profession of his forefathers. Boarding was also his method; and more than once when a young man he was nearly squeezed to death, the ship swinging apart and hull grinding against hull. In his first ship, the "Danycan," he pursued some merchantmen into the Shannon, landed, ravaged Lord Clare's property, and when a regiment came against him from William the Third's army at Limerick, their commander, seeing only fifty men, feared an ambushade, and allowed Trouin to draw off unmolested. His next exploit nearly cost him his freedom; for, attacking two English frigates in charge of the West Indian fleet, he was, while boarding one, boarded by the other, and only saved from capture by the sudden arrival of his consort.

But danger was not yet over, six English men-of-war came up as he was bearing up for Saint Malo with his two frigates, and twelve out of the thirty West Indians; and he only escaped capture by running amongst the dangerous reefs of the Bréhats. Many more English war-ships and merchantmen did Trouin take, till, in 1693, he was surprised in a fog off the Scillies by Sir David Mitchell's squadron, and taken after a desperate attempt to carry one of the English ships, by boarding. Trouin was wounded in the groin, his ship raked by five English ships, and, as he lay insensible, his crew lowered their flag. At Plymouth, Trouin, who was permitted to receive friends of either sex, was helped by a countrywoman of his and her admirer, a Swedish Captain, and enabled to escape in an open boat. A most tempestuous voyage of fifty hours brought him and his party to Treguier, where with Breton faith, they all went straight to the village church to return thanks; and before long Trouin came across a fleet of West Indians convoyed by two men-of-war, one of them being that "Nonsuch," which some years before had captured Bart. He took them both, recovering the commissions of Bart and Forbin, which were hanging in the "Nonsuch's" cabin. After a long run of successes, mostly against English and Dutch, Trouin drew out a plan for the capture of Rio, where du Clere had just failed badly, and persuaded Pontchartrain to adopt it. Rio, after all its forts were taken, ransomed itself for six hundred thousand crusados and five thousand cases of sugar; and though

the ship on board of which was nearly all the money foundered on the return voyage, enough loot was left to give everybody plenty of prize-money, and to pay ninety per cent. to the company which had found the funds; for the expedition, like so many at that time, though carrying Government troops, was partly a joint-stock affair.

At his death, Duguay Trouin was Lieutenant-General of the King's navies—a rare instance of lowly birth winning its way in the most aristocratic of the aristocratic professions.

Perhaps the most interesting of French corsairs is Thurot, who, born at Nuits in Burgundy, and brought up as a surgeon, ran away because he had stolen from his aunt to help his suffering mother.

For years he scoured the Channel, capturing English merchant-ships and now and then having a few rounds with one of our frigates; but the landing which he was ordered to effect in Ireland in order to draw off attention from the main invading fleet under Conflans was thwarted by de Flobert, commander of the twelve hundred grenadiers who were on board his ships. De Flobert tampered with the other Captains, and went so far as to order four grenadiers to arrest Thurot, who only saved himself by reading the King's commission. This quarrel limited his success to the capture of Carrickfergus, de Flobert flatly refusing to push on to Belfast. As he was leaving the Lough three English frigates bore down upon him; his two consorts deserted him, and after a two hours' fight he was killed and his ship surrendered. The noblesse exulted in his death—"a lesson," they said, "not to give these low fellows important commands"—but the class from which he, and Bart, and Trouin sprang said rightly that he was a victim to aristocratic jealousy. Of the corsairs of the Revolution, I can only mention Leveill  , of Dunkirk, who did our trade a deal of mischief, besides capturing in one fight three of our cruisers—one a full-rigged ship; and Surcouf, of St. Malo, whose career lasted till 1827, and who, had he been properly supported, would have destroyed our commerce in the Indian Ocean. As it was, though thwarted continually by the authorities in the Isle of France, he captured the "Triton," and a number of other Indiamen—ships which in those days carried from one hundred and fifty to two hundred men, and often as many as twenty-six guns. The capture of the "Kent" has become historic. In

our accounts, Surcouf is accused of giving no quarter; the French argue that as out of the "Kent's" complement of three hundred only eleven were killed and forty-four wounded in an engagement of nearly two hours, this cannot be the fact. The Captain of the "Kent," Rivington, son of the then St. Paul's Churchyard bookseller, fell, crying: "Don't give up the ship." The "Gentleman's Magazine" talks of "General St. John's lovely wife, daughter to the Margrave of Anspach, and her three charming daughters being victims to the lawless excesses of a savage banditti;" whereas Surcouf carefully placed sentries over the ladies' cabins and in every other possible way secured their comfort.

Like other corsairs, Surcouf quarrelled with his superiors; Napoleon made him second in command of the French East Indian Fleet, but he would not serve under the incapable Admiral Linois, and kept to the Channel till Linois and his ship were captured. He had an idea of seizing Australia—the marvel is that the French should then have so neglected their opportunity. Happily for us they knew little of what then was truly "*terra Australis incognita*;" and Surcouf took to picking up rice-ships off the Sandheads, and afterwards to running "free labourers" from Madagascar to Bourbon. He was the last of the French corsairs, of whom there are two things to remark: first, that they fought on the whole far better than the regular naval officers—coming mostly of a seafaring stock, whereas the others were often like the Captains of Charles the Second's time, as described by Macaulay—noble, brave, no doubt, but wholly ignorant of their business. Secondly, that they "struck at England through her commerce," and that, if we are ever again at war with France, and Admiral Aube's plan of bombarding our watering places is carried out, corsairs will play, as of yore, an important part in the work of "harrying John Bull." How much mischief one such corsair may do was proved to the present generation by the Alabama's feats during the American War of Secession.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "*Gerald*," "*Alexia*," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER IV. CELIA.

CELIA DARRELL was a woman of a happy disposition. She was always amused;

as they say, all was fish that came to her net. She was, indeed, a delightful girl, with excellent health, high animal spirits, and a great love of admiration, or, rather, of being liked; for, with all her beauty, she was not vain. And everybody did like her, women as much as men, except a few prejudiced, old-fashioned souls like Colonel Ward.

How could anyone help liking a girl with such pretty manners, always ready to join in any fun, enjoying the duller party, and being kind to the stupidest people! A woman like Celia need never fear that she will not be liked. The only danger is—but that will not matter to her—that some rash creatures may allow themselves to like her too much, to trust her too far, and then find out, with more or less pain, how very little worth is love or friendship from a character like hers.

But it was most natural that people who loved Celia should idealise her, for her sweetness and charm were very real, and if they sometimes bestowed themselves in the wrong place—no one can be quite perfect! If, when the man to whom she was engaged arrived hot and tired from his journey, with no thought in his mind but that of seeing her again, of finding her waiting for him, she was lingering over her tea in perfect peace in the garden of an old inn, three or four miles up the river, laughing with her cousin Vincent as if she had no interest in the world but him—well, perhaps, this only showed her perfect confidence in herself and Paul, and her splendid power of keeping a secret.

The old Queen's Head was a long white building, with a brown porch all overgrown with purple clematis, standing high on the river's bank. Boating people often stopped there; it was reached by flights of red-brick steps in the garden, which was all brilliant on this autumn day with dahlias, and nasturtiums, and clove pinks—a varied mass of deep-coloured flowers. Half way up, off the steps, there was a little quaint wooden summer-house, very quaint and shady, with a peaked top and a weathercock.

The smiling girl of the inn had brought down tea there for Vincent and his cousin, by no means for the first time that summer. Their boat was lying at the foot of the green steep slope below the steps; swallows were twittering and gathering in rows on the roof of the old inn; the shadows grew long very early now, and the dewy nights were cold; they were no doubt talking of

their near departure, which seemed to trouble them much more than Vincent's troubled him.

There was something by no means pleasant or contented, however, in Captain Percival's face, as he sat there and looked at his smiling cousin. He was what people call a handsome man; from his looks he might have been a hero, but he was not a hero. He was a very practical man; he knew excellently well how to enjoy himself, and how to make himself agreeable to other people, if he wished it; but he did not know how to smile, and had never yet been known to deny himself anything for anybody. After all this, one is inclined to say that he and his cousin, Celia, were not badly matched. Perhaps he might have thought so himself, for different reasons, if the course of the world had been different. Celia had been a delightful companion all through these summer weeks; she had made River Gate and the dull old society of Close and neighbourhood quite endurable. They had chaffed each other from morning till night, and he had let her drag him about where she pleased, pretending to be very lazy, and unwilling to move.

Mrs. Percival had been grateful to Celia, till she began to be anxious, for Vincent was a difficult person at home, very hard to please, and giving himself the tremendous airs of which Colonel Ward complained. He was only in England for six months at this time, and Paul had seen him at Easter, when they naturally found nothing at all to say to each other. When Paul came down from Oxford after taking his degree, Vincent happened to be away, so that Paul had those few glorious days, which ended with his engagement to Celia. And Paul believed that Celia loved him; and he went abroad, because they all told him he had better, and lived on her not very satisfying letters all the summer, and believed, and trusted. Well, after all, Celia had no idea of deceiving him.

She quite meant to marry him by-and-by, and to enjoy life with plenty of money; at present she was enjoying her tea, and the warm sweet air of the old garden, and the lovely lights on the water, and her jokes with Vincent, though he was hardly so agreeable as usual that afternoon. Her clear pale skin was burnt a little by the sun, but the colour was becoming; it suited the fair hair which, with a tinge of reddish gold, curled under the brim of her sailor hat. Her eyes were very pretty, cloudy blue grey, with dark lashes; they

could be very cold and indifferent, and then they were only grey; but with any excitement they became blue, and wonderfully expressive. They could smile quite distractingly, while the rest of her face was still; they were smiling now, as she looked at Vincent, and she had altogether what he amused himself by calling her "electric look."

Vincent had all along said anything in the world he pleased to this pretty plaything of a cousin: lately he had been a little angry at finding out how much he really admired her; but this was such hopeless nonsense that he kept it quite to himself, and meant to go on with their easy chaffing intimacy to the end.

"Don't look so cross," said Celia in her soft voice. "Is the tea too bad? Or are the midges beginning to bite you? Or is there anything dreadfully wrong with my hat?"

One of Celia's advantages over other people was her way of speaking, clear, deliberate, and slow. It was impossible to ignore what she said. Her voice was musical, though she knew nothing of music; a little high-pitched, and plaintive; her enemies said it was an affected voice.

"Nothing wrong with your hat; it's a very pretty hat," said Captain Percival. "Of course the tea is beastly, and so are the midges. They will be worse on the water; but you can pull, and I can smoke."

"They never bite me," said Celia, looking at her hands.

"Nothing ever bites you, I should think," said her cousin. "And you are never ill, are you—never even a finger-ache? I suspect you don't know what pain means."

"That would be saying a little too much, perhaps. I used to tumble down and hurt myself, when I was a small child. But I have never been ill. I suppose I don't really know what pain means."

"The worst of people like you is," said Vincent rather viciously, "that they can't feel for anybody else. Nothing makes any impression upon them."

"You are quite mistaken. I'm not so heartless. I think it is very horrid of the midges to bite you."

Vincent twisted his moustache, looking rather crosser than before.

"I'm not chaffing," he said, "I'm serious, do you know. I believe you have no more feeling than a stone. Did anything ever happen in your life to make you unhappy?"

Celia gazed at him, her eyes growing

more and more blue, and smiling more than ever. There was wonder in the smile, for she perceived that he was in earnest. For the first time in that long summer flirtation, their talk was going a little below the surface. It was not her doing.

"Why do you ask me such absurd questions?" she said. "And why do you think I have no more feeling than a stone? Do you know, I am very glad you are not generally serious."

Vincent made no reply at once. He was not looking at her now, but away towards the river.

"Now do something to please me," she said, after a moment of really uncomfortable silence. "Wait till we get home, and then be serious with Uncle Tom in the study. Or wait till to-morrow; that will be better still; to-morrow is Sunday. Will you, Vincent?"

After a minute he answered, rather roughly and suddenly, "I don't know whether you are a witch, or a baby."

Vincent's manner was really puzzling. She had very often seen him out of temper; the usual calm of River Gate was seriously disturbed now and then by his unreasonableness; but these bursts of rage were generally concerned with his dinner, or his clothes, or mistakes of servants, or fancied insults and neglects from his devoted father and mother. Celia had never been the object of them herself, and had always succeeded in bringing peace back directly. She could not imagine why he should be cross now, or what she had done to injure his feelings. Perhaps she had a right to be injured at his asking her whether she had ever been unhappy: the touches of black on her white dress might have kept him from forgetting that a year had not long passed since her father died; and if she had never loved any one else, she had loved her father.

There were few enough moments in Celia's life when she had any deep feeling, either of joy or sorrow; and still fewer were the moments when such a feeling found its way into words. In fact, she was harder and cooler than most young women of her age and kind; and yet she did not like Vincent to call her a stone. But she did not contradict him any further at that time, and seemed to deserve the character he gave her. To her quick instincts, after the first surprise, his unusual earnestness was a danger signal, and she had no wish to find herself among any troublesome

rocks. So far, she had sailed with him over a smooth sea; for every reason, she wished their present terms of easy cousinship to continue to the end; and, indeed, so did he; but he was a little off his guard that afternoon, and man is not always master of his fate.

For a few minutes they sat in silence: a most extraordinary thing for them. Vincent was still staring away up the river, frowning fiercely. Celia, having slowly lowered her eyes from his handsome, sulky face, played a little tune on the table, and tried to look grave too. The state of things both bored and amused her; she was also conscious of an odd little excitement, which made her heart beat rather faster than usual. Celia was nothing if not practical; she was never afraid to face facts, or their consequences either.

"He and I in love with each other! What an awful business! Oh, nonsense; how can he be such a fool!"

This thought flashed through her mind, while her fingers tapped the table impatiently. Glancing up again for an instant, she knew that life would have been a different thing if such a man as Vincent had been in Paul's place. The thought was not quite new; she had crushed it down before, as she crushed it now, at once and without pity; but to-day there was this to be said in excuse for it: Vincent had never before given it a right to exist.

"Isn't it time to go?" she said presently, in her gentlest, coolest manner. "Those dear things will be getting anxious about us."

"Sick of it, are you? So am I," said Vincent savagely, as he met her blue eyes looking at him in a sort of sweet mockery. "The sooner it's over the better. This sort of thing is unbearable, you know."

"Weak tea, and midges that bite one's nose," said Celia. "Yes, I agree with you; the sooner it's over the better. Only do try not to be so cross about it. Remember, it is our last afternoon, except Sunday, which doesn't count for much. Next Saturday you will be ever so far away."

"And much difference that will make to you. You will sleep just the same on Monday night, and laugh and play tennis with some fools all day on Tuesday, and never—well, never give me another thought, after all these weeks we have had together. And now you tell me not to be serious. It's the truth, Celia—I was thinking just now that, in spite of all our jolly time together, you wouldn't care one straw if you heard I was dead."

So Celia found herself among the rocks in earnest; but her power of steering was still equal to the occasion. She answered him very quietly.

"Please don't say what is not true. I shall miss you very much; but is that a reason why I should make you and myself unhappy by being dismal beforehand?"

At the same time she knew that Vincent was right in his forebodings of her behaviour next week, only—poor Vincent!—with the addition of Paul. His last bitter words, "you wouldn't care one straw if you heard I was dead," she could have answered effectively in certain lines from "Chastelard," which had been copied out for her once upon a time by a friend who knew her well, and loved her with a romantic girl's love in spite of it.

Nay, dear, I have
No tears in me; I never shall weep much,
I think, in all my life; I have wept for wrath
Sometimes, and for mere pain, but for love's pity
I cannot weep at all. I would to God
You loved me less; I give you all I can
For all this love of yours, and yet I am sure
I shall live out the sorrow of your death
And be glad afterwards.

But Celia was not at all inclined now to run into any poetical exaggerations, or to think of the future, even the near future of next week. The present, with its sudden and strange developments, was quite enough to occupy her. She was no longer amused now, but vexed and astonished. Vincent had changed so unaccountably, while she had not changed at all: it was really most provoking. She had believed that they were both out of reach of violent feelings of any sort. She saw no reason why their summer should not end as pleasantly as it had begun; her his reproaches would have been absolutely laughable, if they had not been unspeakably tiresome, and had not brought with them, like an echo, the slightest sting of regret, the faintest shiver, making her fancy for a moment that she herself was as foolish as Vincent, and that a sort of dark curtain was drawing down over her world, flowery garden and stealing river, because he was going away.

But she was only weak for a moment, and proceeded to behave with all the calm good sense for which her aunt gave her credit. She looked up at him again, this time leaving all mockery and chaff out of the question.

"Don't be silly," she said, "and don't be unjust."

"I beg your pardon, Celia," he said,

brought back suddenly to reason by a stronger nature than his own; and then she laughed a little, and he smiled rather queerly.

"I had better go and pay for this tea," he said. "We may as well start: it will be getting foggy."

"Very well," said Celia; and while he went off up to the house, she strolled down to the boat, stopping on the old red-brick steps to gather clove pinks, almost black in the shadow, but richer-scented than ever after the sunny day.

Then she stood looking into the water till Vincent came, wishing, a little too late, that he knew of her engagement. As for telling him, she did not feel inclined to do anything so disagreeable, especially as Paul was now at Woolsborough. She was sorry now that she had not told Paul to stay away till Monday, not that she could not keep him in perfect order; but Vincent's newly-discovered feelings would make his eyes unnaturally sharp, she knew, and a scene before he went was a thing very much to be avoided.

She took the sculls on the way down, and he sat in the stern, and smoked and watched her as she rowed. The autumn afternoon was already growing misty and dim; those mounting clouds, which Paul saw from the towing-path at Woolsborough, were slowly climbing in the west; the red, suffused light of the sun as he descended made the broad calm river glow like polished copper. There was no sound, but a faint splash against the bank here and there; a ripple about a fallen tree, showing how fast that silent current ran; or the rising of a fish suddenly. Vincent and Celia started on their last little voyage in silence, but she put out all her young strength, and the boat went flying down the stream. She rowed as if she were anxious to bring this chapter in her story to an end. At first Vincent did not interfere, but he very soon began to show that this wish was not his.

"Easy now," he said. "What's the use of a pace like that? The stream will take us down quite soon enough."

"I don't think so, do you know," she answered. "It will be nearly dark when we get home, and Aunt Flo will be anxious about us."

"Celia, how false you are!"

"Vincent, you are very disagreeable."

"No," he said gravely. "I can't go on chaffing for ever, like you, but I am never disagreeable. I'm in earnest, and I'm un-

selfish, which is an awful thing to have to be. Some people can do that sort of thing cheerfully, but I can't. They are either cold-blooded, like fish, or else they are saints. I am neither one nor the other."

"You are very mysterious," said Celia, pulling a little harder than before. "I never suspected you of being a saint, but then—I didn't even know you were unselfish."

"I don't suppose you did. That is your coldness. As cold as a fish, as hard as a stone——"

"What a character!" she said, with a little laugh. "False, cold, hard. It is a pity you have found out all that. We might as well have parted friends."

"Look here. Change places with me."

"No, thanks. I would rather stay here."

"If you don't, I shall upset the boat," said Vincent quietly.

She hesitated a moment. On any afternoon before she would have dared him to do it; but to-day his temper seemed a little dangerous, and she did not even care to provoke a dispute with him. After all, what did it matter? Celia had one great secret of success in life. She could see the relative importance of things. She had no small humours and obstinacies, and knew when she had better give in. On this occasion, the change would only mean getting home rather later; nobody would be angry, and nobody, except Paul, would be anxious. So they changed places, and Vincent almost immediately shipped the sculls and lighted another cigarette. Celia settled herself very comfortably among her cushions in the stern, and wrapped a warm shawl round her shoulders. They went on drifting slowly down the stream. Damp mists were gathering; the red glow was becoming still more lurid and dim.

"So you did not know I was unselfish?" said Vincent presently.

"I really don't believe I ever thought about it," Celia answered languidly.

She was half angry with him, and in her heart she said, "What a bore you are!" But the voice that spoke, in its utter sweetness, coldness, and indifference, might have belonged to the classic nymph, who reigns over that river, and might have warned a daring mortal to venture no farther. If Celia had spoken like that to Paul Romaine, nothing more would have been heard of him or his pretensions; but Captain Percival was not so sensitive.

"After all," he began, "Celia, don't you

think we may as well understand each other before I go away?"

"About your unselfishness, do you mean?" said his cousin, in the same languid tone.

If she could still keep off the evil moment she would; and yet with her vexation a little feeling of triumph mixed itself. That Vincent—selfish, worldly, mercenary (but she only called it prudent), with his faultless taste, and his tremendous admiration for himself—should be reduced to making love to his penniless cousin, and to breaking all his fineries to leave England a free man unless ten thousand a year happened to fall at his feet—it was too funny, really. Celia was sorry, of course; but she was not altogether displeased. Imagine the feelings of Aunt Flo and Uncle Tom; could they ever have suspected their magnificent son of such a thing?

It would have been better, after all, to spoil the fun of the summer by letting the world and Vincent know of her stupid engagement. Must she tell him now? No, she could not. There were plenty of obstacles without that. She must write to him next week, or make Aunt Flo write for her; a letter might catch him at Gibraltar. But even now, in spite of his strange talk, she could hardly believe that Vincent absolutely meant to ask her to marry him. If so, it was a pity indeed that the thing was impossible; for though she was not actually in love with Vincent any more than with Paul, she admired Vincent more than any man she had ever seen.

"Yes, about my unselfishness, if you like to put it in that way," he said. "I want you to understand that. There's nothing else in the way, that I know of. Don't you know what I should do, if I were selfish, Celia?"

"Riddles are far too much trouble," she said. "As you are not selfish, and can't do it, why should I bother myself to guess?"

"Very true," said Vincent. "I should ask you to marry me."

To this Celia made no answer at all.

"You have made a conquest, you see, dear," her cousin went on. "Well, we both know it is no use thinking of it. The Canon does not see his way to making me a larger allowance, and a man can't very easily alter his tastes, or his way of living. You would hate poverty just as much as I should; in fact, I could not expose you to it. Now, Celia, perhaps you under-

stand that going away is something of a grind."

A long silence followed. The light was fading fast now, and the wooded banks loomed dark above the water. Vincent seemed to feel that he must do something; he unshipped the sculls again, and began rowing gently. He looked at Celia, sitting dark and muffled in the stern; her face was turned away from him, a little towards the bank, and looked very pale.

"Can't you say anything, Celia?" he said at last. "Of course it is for my own misery that I love you. I didn't mean to tell you—but it could not be helped."

"Why did you tell me? I don't quite know," she said. "What do you want me to say? I can only say I am very sorry."

"You see what I mean, don't you? You think it is impossible?"

"Perfectly impossible." She was going to add—"for more reasons than one," but she stopped herself, fearing to bring on worse explanations.

At the same time, Vincent's words, and the tone of his voice, gave her more intense pain than she had thought possible, and she was angry with herself and with the pain. But it only made her own voice colder and harder when she spoke again.

"I cannot imagine why you told me. What could be the use of it?"

"It did seem useless," Vincent confessed; "but put yourself in my place, and you won't wonder so much. Going away for years, and leaving you, and not knowing what might happen; and then the thought that somebody else might turn up—of course he will; and, Celia, am I going beyond the truth when I say that you like me better than the rest of the world; that both you and I are never so happy as when we are together? You will miss me, I know, though, of course, not so much as I shall miss you."

"Have you forgotten that I am hard, and cold, and false?" said Celia; "or that I am to play tennis and enjoy myself more than ever next week, when you are gone away?"

"Nonsense! I only said all that because you provoked me, and I wanted to see what you would say. Now listen. We can't know anything about the future, hang it! but, dear, will you be engaged

to me? Some day I shall get an appointment which will enable me to marry, or I shall leave the service and go into trade, or something. Anything, so that we shall belong to each other. Will you, darling?"

In spite of all Celia's common sense, for a minute or two she wavered terribly. It was a good thing that Vincent could not see of what she was thinking, or know what a thrill of pleasure his words sent through her whole nature, strong and cool as it was. It was a good thing, too, that they were in a boat, where he could not behave unreasonably. In the few moments before she spoke Celia reviewed the pros and cons in her mind. This was a man she could love—but he would soon cease to love her. She knew him too well to deceive herself about that. Poverty, discontent, repentance, to follow on a little romance unnatural to both of them. While Paul Romaine and Red Towers would be always the same, always her own, and life would be what she chose to make it.

"I would not be so unkind to you, Vincent," she said. "No; please say no more about it. Your father and mother would be awfully vexed, and it would be ruin to you. I am not unselfish, don't think so. You are rather mistaken about me—at least, you were more right in what you said before. I am a very cold person, I daresay. Anyhow, I couldn't do this. And you have astonished me so utterly, that I feel sure it is not my fault."

After that the boat flew down the river again, and was soon passing by old red houses and gardens full of fruit-trees, and then flashed with dangerous speed under the railway-bridge, and over many broken reflections of the lights of the town, and then under the other bridge where the boats were, and up, at last, to the landing-place at River Gate. There, in the dark, Paul was standing, and Celia, who had steered through the last half hour in some fear of her life, caught both his hands so joyfully that he was repaid for his waiting. She laughed and talked excitedly as she walked up through the garden. Paul, too, was in the highest spirits; but they did not let out their secret to Vincent, who followed them silently.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE

"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER IV. "ALNASCHAR"

"How are you to-day, Con?" asked the Vicar cheerily, on the morning after Hugh's arrival. May, having terrible visions of Con dropping dead suddenly of heart-disease, had decided to hint to her father his need of rest and advice. Acting upon this hint the Vicar had come out after breakfast to enquire into the state of Con's health.

"How are you to-day, Con?"

"Finely, yere rivrence."

"Miss May is worrying herself about you."

"See that, now!" cried Con in admiration of May's solicitude about him.

"She thinks you're killing yourself with work," said the Vicar, laughing.

"I'm in dhread the crowner 'ill niver bring it in that, yere rivrence," Con rejoined, with a responsive grin, while shoving his old caubeen aside to scratch his head.

"What put it into her head that you weren't well, I wonder?"

"Well, yere rivrence, to tell ye the thruth, it was meself. She was always spindin' her bit o' money in buyin' 'baccey for me, and I tould her me heartt had a touch of the asthma, an' the doother was agin me shmokin'—that's how it was, yere rivrence."

"I wish you hadn't told her such a story, Con."

"Faix thin, yere rivrence, ye don't wish it more nor meself. I've to shtale ivery whiff I take, in dhread of her seein' me."

"It was for that you nearly smoked us out of the dining-room last night, burning those weeds!"

"It was so," replied Con with perfect complacency. "Bat ye'll say nothin' about her buyin' bits o' 'baccey for me to Miss Pim, yere rivrence!" he added anxiously.

"To Miss Pim?"

"Shure she hardly lets her nexst or near me now, at all, at all. If she sees her pass the time o' day to me she calls her off, as if I'd the small-pox on me. She's in dhread of her catchin' Popery of me, I'm thinkin'!" cried Con, with biting bitterness.

"I don't think she knows what your religion is, Con," the Vicar answered soothingly. He was disgusted with Miss Pim's snobbery; but he could not well say so to Con.

"'Tisn't complainin' I am, yere rivrence. Sorra a bit I'd mind if she rained papiahts an' shnawed thracs an me all day. May-be, it's for the good of her own sowl she's doin' it, an' divil a ha'porth of harrum she does mine. But here's where it is, yere rivrence, axin' yere pardon for the freedom I'm takin'."

As Con paused here for encouragement, the Vicar said:

"Tut! Con, we're too old friends to be afraid of offending one another at this time of day."

Con was exceedingly gratified by this compliment—the highest that could be paid him.

"Thank ye kindly, yere rivrence," he replied, touching his caubeen humbly, to show that if the Vicar chose to overlook his position as a servant, he did not himself forget it. "It's Miss May, yere rivrence, I was thinkin' on. She's thryin' to clip the nathur out of her, like that

three," he said, pointing to a hollybush which was clipped till it looked like a mop. "She" being, of course, Miss Pim. "She is so. Miss May, Heaven bless her! can no more help bein' a lady nor a rose can help smellin'; and Misther Hugh says to me, 'Con!' says he. 'Yes, Misther Hugh,' says I, 'I've been all over the worruld, Con,' says he, 'an' seen as many sowrts of ladies as there's flowers in this gardin,' says he, 'but I've niver seen wan that was more to Miss May nor a daisy's to a rose,' says he. 'There isn't her likes in this parrt of the counthry anyway,' says I. 'No,' says he, 'nor in Lannon, nor Amerikey; an' sorra a wan 'ill be fit to hould a candle to her when she grows up either, in spite of Miss Pim,' says he. 'Ah shure, Misther Hugh,' says I, 'Miss Pim's coom to larn her to be a lady,' says I. 'Larn a lark to sing wid a whistle!' says he. 'Miss May wants no larnin' to be a lady, an' it isn't from Miss Pim she'd get it, if she did,' says he."

The Vicar wondered within himself from what germ of a remark of Hugh's Con had developed, after his manner, this highly florid, figurative, and un-Hugh-like conversation. Hugh had certainly said something, for Con built always upon some base; but it was little likely that Hugh would discuss Miss Pim so freely to Con, even if he had known enough of her to speak in this decided way. He determined to sound Hugh upon the subject, in the hope of inducing him to use his influence with the infatuated Mrs. Beresford to disenchant her with Miss Pim. For Mrs. Beresford had an even higher opinion of "the Hogshire Greys" than of Miss Pim's last employers. It was a very delicate subject to broach, perhaps, even to such a friend as Hugh; but their common interest in May seemed to justify the confidence. Accordingly, as they set out for a walk together through the woods—leaving May to Miss Pim's tender mercies—the Vicar began:

"Poor May looked as piteous as Fan used, when you were off to the woods in old days, and had to leave her behind."

Fan was a setter, and an incorrigible poacher.

"I was just going to ask you to get that governess to give her—and me—a holiday during my visit. I assure you, I looked forward more to seeing her than any one in England—even of my own people."

The Vicar was greatly pleased, and touched, too.

"Well, she has played Elaine to your Lancelot," he said, having the school-master's habit of quotation and allusion. "There was hardly a day in which she did not speak of you; and all her landmarks in every walk we take are places where Hugh did this, or that, or the other."

Hugh remained silent. Presently the Vicar said:

"I'm afraid this new governess is rather a trial to her."

"I was going to speak to you about her, sir, if—if I might take the liberty," Hugh replied hesitatively.

"And I was going to take the liberty to speak about her to you," rejoined the Vicar, laughing. "I was going to ask you to use your influence with my wife to change her governess."

"My influence! I'm afraid Mrs. Beresford would think no better of my opinion about teaching than you used to think, sir. You remember?"

"There's no better judge of the kind of teaching I mean than yourself, Hugh—the teaching of what I may call nice-mindedness. Now I have a strong suspicion that Miss Pim is nice-minded only in the sense Swift meant when he said, 'A nice man is a man of nasty ideas.' She's rather like a fussy and slatternly maid, who soils with her grimy hands the perfectly pure cup or platter she sets about to clean. I mean that she's likely to put silly, or worse than silly ideas into a child's head under pretence of taking them out—eh?"

"It was something like that I was going to say to you myself, sir."

"Why? How did you manage to take her measure so soon?"

"From some things May told me; and from the fuss Miss Pim made about our walk together yesterday."

"Just so; she spoke as if you had quite compromised the child!"

"I fancy she'll not speak so again, sir," Hugh said, smiling at the recollection of the biting sarcasm wherewith the Vicar had reproved Miss Pim.

"I was wrong to get into a rage about it; but there have been so many things of the same kind of late that I was quite out of patience with her. However, I apologised to her afterwards. The fact is, she can't help herself; and to scold her is like the boy's upbraiding of the frog he pelted, 'I'll larn you to be a toad!'"

"It's a pity for May, though."

"Of course it is; and that is why I

want you to help me to disenchant my wife with Miss Pim. She had such high testimonials from such high people that my wife will hardly trust the evidence of her own eyes or ears. As for me, she thinks me prejudiced because I object to the young lady's appropriation of my Curate. However, I fancy that a combined assault from you and me together would be effective."

"I'm afraid Mrs. Beresford would think my interference a piece of impertinence."

"She would think nothing an impertinence from you; and she knows, besides, your deep interest in May."

Then Hugh said a surprising thing, surprising to the Vicar and even to himself afterwards.

"I don't think that either she or you know how deep it is." And then, after a pause, he added: "I hope one day to win her, sir, as my wife."

The Vicar stood still, struck dumb for a moment with astonishment, and then exclaimed, "My dear Hugh!"

"I couldn't help telling you, sir, as it didn't seem right, somehow, to think of such a thing without letting you know."

"But she's so mere a child, and there may be so many changes of all kinds before she's a woman."

"Of course, sir, I meant only that I should never change about this. I have had it in my thoughts every day since I left here, and I shall have it in my thoughts more than ever when I go back. But I know that the chances are all against her coming to care in that way for me when she grows up—even the way she cares for me now is against it. Still it is the thing I mean to live for, and work for, and I can only take my chance when the time comes. Yet, I shall never change about this, sir, never." Hugh spoke with a fervour and determination which meant so much from him that the Vicar was convinced of the force and constancy of his resolution.

"Well," he replied presently, "I cannot imagine her, nor could I ever bear to imagine her, as anything but a child. However, as the time must come, I suppose, when she will leave me for some one or the other, I can say with all my heart that I would rather it were for you than for any one else in the world."

"Thank you, sir."

There was then rather a long silence which Hugh at last broke.

"I'm afraid, sir, you feel that I ought

not to have spoken, or even thought, of such a thing?" he said patiently.

"No, Hugh, no; I was startled, that's all."

"You see, sir, I have thought it over and over so often that it has become almost part of myself; and I think that if you know how the thought has kept me straight in many and many a temptation you would be glad that I had it."

"I can't realise it; that's all, my boy," rejoined the Vicar with a sigh; and he then changed the conversation.

Presently, however, he reverted to the subject abruptly and irrelevantly.

"I'm afraid you will think that I'm jealous of you about May, Hugh; and perhaps there's something of this at the bottom of my feeling in the matter; but, besides, it was a kind of shock to me to imagine such a thing. You can understand."

"Of course, sir; but I didn't think it right somehow, to have this always in my thoughts, without telling you about it. I suppose, too, that I've got so used to looking forward to it, that it has ceased to be strange to me."

"Well, Hugh, I could not wish anything better for her, or for you either, if I may say so; but it's too far off, even to think about—at least, for me to think about," he added, smiling.

Nevertheless, he thought a good deal about it without venturing to take his good wife into his confidence. She would certainly be shocked, and probably be annoyed, and even offended, with Hugh. Great, therefore, was his amazement when the first thing she said to him, in their usual nightly conference before sleeping, was:

"Did you ever see anything like Hugh's infatuation for May? He is just over head and ears in love with her."

"What! with a child like that!" exclaimed the diplomatic Vicar.

"He's just the sort of man to be more in love with a child than with a woman. He's very nice, I don't think he could be nicer [in any way, but he's a Don Quixote kind of man."

"You mean he's in love in the old chivalrous way," said the Vicar, astonished by his wife's penetration, both into Hugh's secret and into his character. "Yes; he would almost fall in love with a woman only because she was helpless, or because he had saved her, or something; and then he would love her in that superfine, Don Quixote way, as if she were a goddess."

"He'll have a very fine property, too, when his father dies, and there's no better family in Hogshire!" exclaimed his wife enthusiastically.

"Which have you arranged for first—his father's funeral, or his marriage to May?" asked her husband.

"I'm always wrong, of course! But, as sure as your name's George Beresford—if he lives and May lives—he will come back one of these days to propose for her!"

"So he says himself."

"What!"

"So he told me to-day, himself. He said he hoped, if he lived, to come back to propose for her."

"He told you that!"

"I don't see why you should be so surprised at it, my dear, since you have just told it to me yourself."

"Was he asking your consent?"

"No, not exactly; he thought it right to tell me what was in his mind."

"It would have been in better taste to have spoken to me about it," cried Mrs. Beresford, whose ruling passion was jealousy.

"Oh, nonsense! He couldn't have brought himself to speak about it to you."

"I don't see why."

"If you don't see why at once, all the words in the world won't explain it to you."

"Well, I don't." Then, after a pause, she asked: "Did he speak about it to May?"

"Speak about it to May! If you could suppose that he'd speak to May about it, you might well suppose he would speak about it to you. Of course he couldn't suggest such a thing to the child. On the contrary, he's exceedingly angry with that kitchen-maid-minded Miss Pim, for trying to fasten the idea into May's head."

"Miss Pim! Why, I heard her myself give May a long lecture for having it in her head!"

"Did you ever try, my dear, to brush flue out of fur with a clothes' brush? The harder you brush it, the closer it sticks. Here's a jest about a sweetheart that lies as light as flue on the child's mind, to be blown away by a breath; and that woman with her coarse brush does all she can to drive it well in. She's a thoroughly vulgar-minded woman, and Hugh is as uneasy as I am about the effect of her influence upon the child."

"He's making very sure of her."

"He isn't at all. He fears that she'll

never come to care for him in any other way than she does now; but he doesn't want her to grow up a Miss Pim all the same."

After a tough battle over Miss Pim, in which Mrs. Beresford fought so fretfully on the side of the governess, that it was plain her own faith in her was shaken—for a prejudice is always most violent at the moment of its being exorcised. After this Pyrrhic battle, Mrs. Beresford crowed the Vicar asleep with pæans upon her own amazing penetration into Hugh's feelings and intentions.

Thus the Vicar, his wife, Miss Pim, and even Hugh himself, for different reasons, thought it wrong for May to have it put seriously into her head that Hugh meant one day to make her his wife if he could. Not so Con, who, on the whole, when May's character is considered, was really the wisest in this matter.

"Oh, Con, smoking!" May cried in a pathetic tone of remonstrance on surprising that wily diplomatist next morning cowering beneath the shelter of a stack of peastakes to suck away at his pipe with the voracity of a famished farmed-out baby at its bottle.

"Just a dhrass, Miss May. The docther he says I mustn't give it up all at wanst; annything suddint, he says, might be after givin' a shock to the hearrt. 'Con,' says he, 'you must take a dhrass of it three times a day afther a meal,' says he, 'to let the hearrt down aisy,' says he; 'for it's a suddint shock that cracks the hearrt like a hollow nut,' says he."

This prescription of a "dhrass," to be taken three times a day, after a meal, sounded sufficiently medical to impose upon May, who said only:

"But you mustn't smoke more than that, Con."

"See that now! That's just what the docther said. 'You mushn't smoke more nor that, Con,' he said," Con cried with an admirable assumption of amazement at May's sagacity.

"Here is the name of the orchid Mr. Hugh gave you yesterday, to try to grow for me, Con," May said, reading out the name from a slip of paper—"Catleya gigas."

Now, Con never pleaded direct ignorance of anything; least of all, of his own business.

"I thought it was wan of thim sowrt, Miss May."

"You know it, Con!"

"Shure it's an orchid, it is, miss," he replied, as if it were but a small matter for him to know all about so simple a thing.

"Mr. Hugh didn't think you'd know it."

"Och! Know it! It's wan of thim furrin orchids from Amerikey."

"Yes; he brought it from America."

"Whiriver he brought it from it's an American orchid, as the name 'ud tell ye, miss."

"It's Latin, Con," May said with some pride. "I wonder why they give all flowers Latin names!"

"It's this way it is, miss. Latin is as ould as the flowers is, and they've kep' the names Adam gev' 'em," Con explained, knowing that his Bible was in Latin. Fearing, however, that he was getting a bit out of his depth, he hurried on to say: "What do ye think, Miss May, I've bought for Misther Hugh to plant wid his own hands?"

"What, Con?"

"A shlip of an orange three, miss!" Con answered, grinning significantly. "An' it's our own orange blossoms we'll have when he comes home for the weddin'."

"What wedding?"

"Your weddin', miss, to be sure! When I says to him, 'Ah, thin, Misther Hugh,' I says, 'it isn't married ye are yet!' he says, 'I'm too young to think of that, Con, for six or seven years yet.' 'Six or seven years!' I says. 'Miss May'll be grown up by thin,' I says, 'and there isn't the likes of her,' I says, 'in this counthry anywhere,' I says. 'No, nor anywhere else,' he says. 'I've never seen the likes of her, an' I niver will,' he says. 'She's worth waitin' for,' I says. 'Ay, Heaven bless her!' he says. 'Amen,' says I. 'Heaven bless her—and spare her and you to aich other, an' me to dance at yere weddin', I says."

May was too young to see anything extraordinary in Hugh's thus unbosoming himself to Con, and too young even to have discovered Con's weakness and strength—the amazing imaginative forcing power by which he developed the full-blown flower of a conversation out of the merest seedling. But she had a better basis for the future day-dreams of her life, in some indiscreet words of her mother—spoken long after Hugh's return to America—which convinced the child that he had spoken to her also of his intention one day to claim her as his wife.

AN IMPRISONED DIPLOMATIST.

MR. WASHBURNE was, in 1869, sent as United States' Minister to France. He was hand-in-glove with the Emperor and Empress, and judged that the former was "a great deal better than the Ministers who surrounded him; though his 'coup d'état' must go down in history as one of the blackest crimes that ever smirched the ruler of a great people." The Empress—who interfered too much in politics, and was the instigator of the Mexican, if not, also, of the Franco-Prussian war—made a great deal of the American ladies; "their beauty, grace, and splendid toilettes added so much to the brilliancy of her fêtes." In fact, the last grand dinner at the Tuileries, just a month before war was declared, was in honour of the United States' Minister and Mrs. Washburne. But what gives freshness to Mr. Washburne's version of the oft-told tale of the two sieges, is the fact that all the German States begged the United States' Minister to take charge of the Germans in Paris. He was thus, for a long time, when Paris was shut inside a ring of iron, the only communication—except balloons and pigeons—between the city and the outer world. Count Bismarck, exceptionally civil, allowed him to get his letters and newspapers, and to send out letters and sealed despatches, though he had refused to allow the rest of the diplomats to send out any but unsealed documents. True, the German Premier used sometimes to keep him several days waiting for his bag, when anything had happened at all favourable to France, while he took care that the much more frequent news of French disasters arrived to the minute.

Mr. Washburne had earned the gratitude of the Germans, of whom, when the war began, there were over fifty thousand in Paris alone. It was as it is now in London. If you went to have your hair cut, you found the operator was a German; if you dined in a Palais Royal restaurant, ten to one the waiter was a German. Numbers of them, men and women, were servants and nurses; numbers more served in the big shops. The French, maddened by reverses, which their lying Government had represented as grand successes, began to look on all these as spies. The Germans naturally wanted to get away; they were afraid of a massacre—afraid that some French Titus Oates would accuse them of a "plot." But the French Govern-

ment did not wish to strengthen the enemy's hands; for nearly all these strapping young waiters, and haircutters, and cornet-players, and counter-jumpers, owed military service, and would be at once enrolled in one of the German armies. So Mr. Washburne's "passes" were at first confined to old men, women, and children. Of these there were plenty; and, terrified, pinched with hunger (some of them had been boycotted for weeks), they thronged to the United States' Legation in such a pitiable state that, besides a "pass," Mr. Washburne gave each of them thirty francs for their expenses to the frontier. Of course, it was not his own money; the German Government gave him fifty thousand thalers for the purpose; but the pains he took were unwearied, and the amount of good he did was enough to reward him for any amount of pains.

Very soon French feeling changed; the coming siege began to throw its shadow over the city; the "Figaro"—always one of the vilest of French papers—began to call for the immediate expulsion of those whom lately they had refused to let go.

On 12th August, the Duke of Gramont "discovered" something at the Prussian Embassy, and at once sent off the architect, the maître d'hotel, and the porter and his wife.

Upon this Mr. Washburne placed the house in charge of two stout-hearted young Americans, desiring them to put the United States' seal on everything, and in case of threats to "display the American flag."

Very soon General Trochu issued a general order for all foreigners to leave Paris; but nothing was done in the way of expulsion till the siege really began.

Mr. Washburne, however, was in constant request for other matters. When a German flag of truce was fired on—the Germans said this was done several times—Bismarck sent his complaint not to the French direct, but to the United States' Legation, to be transmitted to them.

When any of the French Emperor's family wanted to put their valuables in safe keeping, they would send them to the same place.

One night Mr. Washburne slept with a big bag of Prince Lucien Murat's gold between his mattresses. Such things were not always safe; one of Mr. Washburne's German pets, whom he had been feeding for two months at the Legation, disappeared with a lot of property, among it a valuable watch and diamond ring which an

American lady had placed in her Minister's charge. The fellow had wormed himself into everybody's confidence, and had found out where the cash and jewels were locked up.

Then, when Victor Hugo came back on 6th September, he stopped to make a speech under the "stars and stripes," and told the people that flag was a sign how easy miracles are to a people fighting for a great principle; and before the middle of the month no less than twenty-one deputations had "addressed" the United States' Minister, thanking the United States for its prompt recognition of the New Republic.

All this time the French "mobiles" were in a state of shameful panic and demoralisation. Not an effort did Trochu make to hinder the Prussians from surrounding the city. Well may Mr. Washburne say of him: "He was the weakest and most incompetent man ever entrusted with such great affairs, as weak as the Indian's dog who had to lean against a tree to bark." Under the old Republic such a man would have been cashiered in a week, if not shortened by a head; but the patience of the Parisians in 1870 is as remarkable as the wretched way in which their troops were held in till the iron ring was fast welded, and then were recklessly flung against Krupp batteries, and kept on icy plateaux till scores of them were frozen to death.

By the end of September, the spyscare was again in full vigour. An American hospital doctor was seized and brought to the Legation to identify himself. All the Consuls of small States, South American mainly—the Ambassadors, except Mr. Washburne, had all gone long before—came to put themselves under the United States' flag. An American clergyman, just come up from Marseilles, was sitting on a Champs Elysées seat, jotting down in his pocket-book the price of his last dinner, when he was seized as a Prussian and thrust into a filthy lock-up. There were plenty of real spies. Mr. Washburne saw one whose bad "make-up" could—he thought—have deceived nobody; "a youth with unmistakeably German face, dressed in the uniform of the old Invalides." Not till the middle of October did the many Germans—mostly domestic servants who had remained behind, begin to get into trouble. Then, after being shut up for a month, the French began to feel that famine was within measurable distance; many, there-

fore, turned off their servants, whom, if they were Germans, the authorities clapped into prison. Mr. Washburne found seventy-four in Saint Lazare; indeed, he was always either finding Germans, or being found out by them. The Government of National Defence behaved very well: Gambetta—of whom Mr. Washburne speaks in the highest terms, upsetting, from personal knowledge, the slander about his being a luxurious spendthrift of public money—paying to send them out of France, so that the German thalers were reserved for feeding those who, through sickness or other causes, were unable to go. Of these there were by mid-December over eleven hundred, some of them in the last stage of misery.

There were noble, but rare, instances of kindness on the part of the French. A poor German died soon after giving birth to a sixth child; an old Huguenot minister and his wife undertook to provide for all the six. For those who still kept going away, Mr. Washburne provided "passes," visé their passports, and gave out cards which, by an arrangement with the railway, enabled the holder to go through Belgium to the German frontier. He also gave money—help to those who could not pay their own way. In this manner he sent out over thirty thousand; while many kept staying on, expecting the siege would be very soon over, and unwilling to break up their homes.

Every now and then, Bismarck did something specially exasperating. The French ships captured a great many German merchant vessels, and kept their crews prisoners of war. "Seize the principal men in all the towns we occupy," said the man of blood and iron, "and hold them fast till our sailors are unconditionally dismissed." That was like his having the Mayor and his deputy driven wildly up and down on a railway engine, when franc-tireurs were supposed to be hiding in any town.

Altogether the French behaved very well; the wonderful order, the way in which the police were managed astonished the American, accustomed to the New York rowdies and "hoodlums" and the normal insecurity of life and property in some parts of the empire city. No gas, no 'buses, no cabs; and yet "nowhere a murder, theft, robbery, or even a row. You may go everywhere at all hours of the night with the most perfect sense of safety." The only riot that Mr. Washburne heard of, was just at

the beginning, when a wine shop in the Avenue d'Italie was gutted because a wounded soldier who had asked for a glass had been charged ten sous for it. All through there was abundance of wine, and till the very last there was plenty of bread. Not till after the middle of January did the rationing begin—three-fifths of a pound for each adult daily; half that for each child over five.

"Black, miserable stuff, chiefly oatmeal, peas, beans, and rice, and as heavy as a pig of Galena lead," says Mr. Washburne. He never ate any of it. All through he managed to get fresh eggs (he had a hen or two in his garden); and the menu of some of his dinners—"oyster soup, leg of mutton, roast duck," and turkey on Thanksgiving Day—is a decided contrast to the fare of the Parisians in general. To the last chickens could be bought; they went up to forty francs apiece! Butter in November was twenty francs a pound; eggs, seven and a half francs a dozen; a cat, eight francs; a rat, two; dogs, from two to three francs a pound.

Mr. Washburne says nothing of the lectures and recitations (all the actors and actresses helping gratis): so strange they must have been in the dark candle-lighted theatres. But he notes that all through there were twenty-three daily papers—publishing, perhaps, the biggest amount of rubbish that has ever been poured upon the world; and he also notes the strange fact that the "Journal Officiel," and other high-class papers, took to publishing essays on Condorcet and Vauban, and giving the correspondence of Lee and Washington!

What astonished him most was that, up to quite late in December, the horses—cavalry, artillery, and all—were in wonderfully good order. They fared better than the poor, among whom by that time the mortality became frightful. One does not wonder that the "Red" papers called loudly for a rationing of everybody, and a confiscation of the private stores on which people like the Rothschilds made good cheer.

Had this been done, undoubtedly the city could have held out till the Germans were forced to break up the siege; for, though, had they attacked at once they might have got in without much trouble—"as easily as the Confederates might have got into Washington after Bull Run"—the defences had, by the end of October, been so strengthened as to be almost impregnable.

Stranger even than the good looks of the horses seems to an outsider the absence

of all attempts on provision shops. The people, when fuel grew scarce, pulled down the hoardings round vacant spaces; the Government cut down all the trees in the Champs and along the avenues; but only one day after the armistice had begun was the great central market broken into and every thing looted; the sellers had refused to lower their prices, and the people were starving. Till then it had seemed as if men of all views had made up their minds to sink their differences, and pull together in face of the enemy. Would they could have gone on doing so during the Commune! As it was, there were two or three attempts by the Reds to turn out the Government; but, when they failed, not a man was put in prison, and no one thought of putting any one to death.

Of the fighting, one cannot even now speak without horror—so many valuable lives worse than wasted; for every defeat made things more hopeless. The French fought desperately—raw troops most of them, Mobiles and National Guard. In the fights at the beginning of December, one regiment lost twenty-three officers. Some of these, Commandant Francheti and General Renault, were men whom the country could ill spare.

There is nothing thrilling in Mr. Washburne's story, except for those who read between the lines, and who have imagination enough to picture what it means to be cut off from the outer world for over four months (your only papers being the fragments found on German prisoners), with news of fresh disasters constantly coming in, and the poor suffering and dying in silence. Well may the United States' Minister, as he gives the "menu" of the good things he had for Christmas, say he does not know how he could have endured it for a week had he been a Frenchman. Then came that spiteful bit of "bounce"—the German occupation; and then ill feeling against the resident Germans—of whom Mr. Washburne was now feeding two thousand nine hundred—got stronger. Seventy more Germans had managed to come in without leave, some bringing money, etc., to their country people, and the police had much ado to protect them from the Parisians, and send them off to Versailles.

The Commune soon followed, its success being due to the seizing by one of the National Guard of the cannon at the Butte Montmartre. Insurgents who have not cannon cannot hope to do much in these days.

Mr. Washburne has no sympathy with the Commune; he speaks of its members as "wretched creatures, who found themselves the depository of an insurrectionary and lawless power." Yet he owns that it was at the outset immensely popular; over a hundred thousand people took part at the installation. Everybody believed that Thiers would make terms; almost every city in France begged him to do so. But he preferred war "à outrance" against his countrymen, while the Prussians were at Saint Denis.

Everybody knows the Commune's career: shells bursting in the streets; the terrible fire of Mont Valérien mowing down the National Guard as they tried, day after day, to come to grips with the Versailles troops; the overthrow of the Vendôme Column, "because the Commune, having at heart the common welfare of all people, could not stomach a monument which detailed the triumphs of a tyrant over conquered nations;" the burning of the guillotine in front of Voltaire's statue—what a mad dance!

Surely Thiers, who had not been shut up for four months, might have had a little pity for his countrymen whom the sudden break-up of the iron ring had thrown into such wild effervescence.

"All the upper part of the Champs Elysées completely deserted for fear of the shells," says Mr. Washburne, on the nineteenth of April. And, all the while, Thiers's bulletins were things to break a feeling man's heart. Instead of listening to any overture for peace, that little man of adamant—far harder than Bismarck—amused himself, and edified his country readers (I was then travelling in Touraine and Anjou, and read his posters in every village) by calling the Communards bad names:

"Those tigers in human form, those 'bêtes fauves,' made another desperate attack; but our brave troops hunted them back into their den."

What a war!

Mr. Washburne was soon at his old work, getting Germans out of Paris. Only this time they were not real Germans, but Alsatians and Lorrainers, who preferred going home and living as German subjects to staying in Paris with the chance of being enrolled in the National Guard and sent out to be shot by the Versailles. Throughout he was treated with marked respect. When he went to Mazas, to see the imprisoned Archbishop, he took him

some newspapers and a bottle of old Madeira—both against the rules—but the Governor let him do as he liked. Again, on the twenty-first of May, Raoul Rigault gave him an autograph order admitting him to see the Archbishop just a few days before the latter was shot.

Here, again, Thiers's fiendish obstinacy cost "the hostages" their lives. Blanqui, the famous Communist, was a prisoner at Versailles; "Send him to us," said the Communards, "and instead we'll give you, not only the Archbishop, but President Bonjean and the whole lot of them;" but Thiers would not; and so "the hostages" remained in prison till, when the Versaillese were in the city, and the Communards were fighting leaderless with the desperation of rats in a hole, a band of ruffians came round and killed them "in revenge." And no one can wonder; for the cold-blooded brutality of the other side, the cynical cruelty of Marquis Gallifet, the shootings at the Orangerie, left them plenty to revenge. Any day for more than a week before, had the Versaillese shown the least dash, they might have come in and saved "the hostages," and prevented the burning of the Hôtel de Ville, and almost every other bit of mischief. But they had not a particle of dash; they lay outside pounding away with their monster guns—Mr. Washburne thinks the battery of Montretout was "the most terrible the world has ever seen; nothing could live under its fire and that of Mont Valérien"—throwing in fifty shells for every one that the Prussians had thrown. The Tuileries were just in the line of fire, and were probably destroyed by the Versaillese shells. No one can tell.

It was a worse reign of terror than Robespierre's.

Every child who was in the streets carrying a milk-can was shot down as a petroleum carrier. There were a few real pétroleuses, no doubt; the famine of the first siege; the brutal hardness of Thiers; the hopeless disappointment of all the grand expectations of a reign of justice and brotherhood had maddened some poor creatures up even to that pitch. But to talk of an organised plan and an enrolled army of petroleum women is simple folly. A little kindness and management at the beginning would have given a very different turn to all this.

Mr. Washburne's account shows that the Commune was not so easily beaten after all. There was quite a week of desperate street

fighting. The Versaillese would never have ventured in had not a servant, one Ducatel, in the office of the Ponts et Chaussées, gone out on the twenty-first of May, and hoisting a white pocket handkerchief, told the Versaillese there was nothing to stop their coming in near the St. Cloud gate; he brought them in, in fact, and they at once occupied the Pont du Jour, and began attacking the barricades.

The Communards had expected that they would try to come in along the Arc de Triomphe road. I remember the enormous barricade just by the Place de la Concorde. Every passer-by had to stop and throw a spadeful of earth on it. Mr. Washburne says that it took thirty-six hours' hard fighting to beat them out of that big barricade, although they were taken in flank and rear. How many fell on both sides will never be known—and all that little Thiers might be President, till MacMahon kicked him ignominiously out. Mr. Washburne saw children, the oldest not fourteen years of age, dead in the Avenue d'Antin. They had been taken for petroleum-throwers; but, as he admits, "the innocent and the guilty suffered alike." One remembers how nearly the correspondent of the "Daily News" was carried off to the Orangerie—i.e., to certain death; happily, he saw in the crowd a Belgian attaché whom he knew, and shouted to him to tell the officers who he was. "I saw five hundred men, women and children, who had been arrested indiscriminately, being marched off to Versailles. The people hooted them as they passed; a well-dressed woman left the gentleman she was walking with, and struck many furious blows at some of the female prisoners. Large numbers of the National Guard were summarily executed." Several Americans were arrested. The Versaillese swore that a shot had been fired out of an American boarding-house on the Boulevard Haussmann; the soldiers burst in, and seized a Miss Herring, a Mrs. Crane, and others, only refraining from shooting them because it was plain they were not French. An American merchant, Mr. Carter, was mistaken for a Communist, and captured by a howling mob, crying, "à mort!" Fortunately an officer recognised and rescued him. And so, after seventy-one days, this second siege—far more terrible than the first—ended in blood and fire; the firing of some of the noblest buildings; the blood of uncounted Communards—over eighty thousand were

arrested, of whom all who were not sent to New Caledonia were shot.

Mr. Washburne has, as I said, no sympathy with the noble aspirations of such members of the Commune as Gustave Flourens. He does not even mention the brothers Reclus, men of science, for whose release, when captured by the Versailles, all the learned societies in Europe petitioned. He is obliged to note the high sense of honour with which Beslay protected the Bank and preserved the national credit. But worse than his want of sympathy is the bad taste with which he describes his interview with Paschal Grousset, Minister of the Interior:

"I shall never forget what strange impressions came over me in finding myself in relations with such a man holding such an absurd and ridiculous title to consideration."

Why more absurd than that a rail-splitter should become United States President? It is strange how conservative many Americans become when they go abroad. It is stranger how fierce a hatred against anything like Communism has grown up among the educated Republicans of the Union.

Grousset was a highly-educated man, a young Corsican newspaper writer. He was Victor Noir's second when Peter Bonaparte shot him dead. Thiers and Guizot had both begun life in the same way, and, as to the Commune being "the tyranny of a few," Mr. Washburne confesses that, to his amazement, "the vast majority of the Parisians were not only in sympathy with it, but abetted and sustained it in its career of crime and blood."

Other writers have seen less "crime and blood" in the career of the Commune than in that of its destroyer Thiers. Certainly, the greater part of the bloodshed was directly due to him and to his fatuous and pitiless obstinacy. He would not make peace; he was determined to strike terror and to punish to the uttermost. Heaven forbid that, if such things ever happen among us, we should have men in power like him; for his destruction of the Commune did not end the struggle.

"Force is no remedy;" and, by-and-by, unless "capital" makes due concessions, and submits to the passing of a Poor law—"that Communist institution," as Continental Conservatives call it—there will be more fighting in Paris, and perhaps a repetition of the wild work of 1871.

APPRENTICES IN EAST LONDON.

A CENTURY or two ago, and who were more in evidence than the London 'prentice boys, always ready to defend their privileges and immunities? The careful and industrious apprentice we all seem to know; he marries his master's daughter, and is greeted eventually as "my Lord Mayor"; while for the idle one there is nothing too bad; from pitch and toss, he rises by gradual degrees to the summit of wickedness; for him the fetters of Newgate, and the rope that hangs from Tyburn tree. But with the efflux of time the race of apprentices has declined. The true apprentice, bound to a master in his craft, by valid indentures, and who will become himself a master, in virtue of good workmanship and without reference to the capital at his disposal, is but an isolated survival of an organisation of labour which has now well-nigh perished. And the great importance of early technical instruction, in the practical way of making things that are sold in the open market and in workshops where the practical wants of customers are studied as well as artistic considerations! all this has led to a desire for the revival and encouragement of apprenticeship, as a vital and definite means of technical instruction. And hence has arisen the Apprentices' Exhibition, which has found quarters at the new People's Palace in the east, where excellent technical classes in handicrafts of various kinds have already been established with much success.

No longer, then, we seek the London apprentice in Cheapside or Cornhill; but further to the east, where trades and industries are growing up, which may help to check the abnormal growth of poverty and destitution.

There is a good deal to be learnt at the East End; and nothing can be more strange and characteristic than the aspect of Whitechapel and the Mile End Road on this morning of Boxing Day, when dozens of street attractions compete with those of the People's Palace, and the Apprentices' Exhibition. Mile End is a marvel in itself, that broad open road, in itself wider and more imposing than any of the famous streets of the west of London. Here is a causeway as wide as an ordinary road, with a great border of waste ground on which a perpetual fair and market is going on. Halfway across the street stands out an old-fashioned wooden public-house

with flagstuffs and halliards rattling in the cold winter wind, and the whole extent of causeway and waste border is crowded as far as the eye can see with a moving, swaying, animated crowd of the most heterogeneous composition : but, taken as whole, of a dark and dingy complexion. And yet there are women gay in apparel, and with hats and bonnets of astonishing richness and colour; there are dashing costermongers with a half-gipsy picturesqueness in the rich silk kerchief and tall sombre hat of their Sunday attire; there are flaunting placards, too, from the booths and stalls; but still the general effect is dark and grimy, a study in black and white, with the white part left out. With all this crowd upon the festive side of the street, the "trottoir" opposite is almost deserted.

Along the road between, there runs on wheels a traffic as strange and varied as that of the causeway: donkeys and barrows dashing along at full speed; hearses and funeral trains; sporting dog-carts and butchers' traps, mingling with tawdry blue tram-cars and parti-coloured omnibuses. And here, by all that is remarkable, comes an equipage, the like of which could nowhere else be seen. A score or more of little urchins, ragged, unkempt, and happy, have chartered a pony-cart all to themselves. In age they range from four to fourteen, and the driver is not one of the veterans of the party; the old coaster's cart is brimming over with the little imps, but the pony does not seem distressed—they run pretty light, these little gamins! You might put a dozen of them in a sack and they would not outweigh one stout Norfolk farmer or Essex pig-dealer.

Dense as the crowd may be, it is good-tempered and only seeks to be amused. Loud is the laughter at any little contretemps. The three-card men have an eager and attentive gallery of spectators; the purse-trick men are greeted with good humour and raillery. Orange peel litters the causeway in profusion, and great barrows of oranges, and trays of oysters, whelks, and every variety of shell-fish form the light refreshment of this great East-end "at home." From one end to another of this great crowded thoroughfare, as far as the eye can reach, there is no sign of a policeman's helmet. There are dark, damp courts and alleys opening out from the great highway, where quarrels and disputes are rife, and where half-tipsy combatants may be seen rolling together in the gutter; but nobody seems

to mind them: such sights and sounds are too common to excite either curiosity or amusement.

Of public-houses there is no end—or of chapels either; the entrances to which are curiously intermixed, as well as the announcements of services at the one and of drinks and amusements at the other. Here and there are solitary paved courts surrounded by old-fashioned almshouses, which, when they were first planted there, no doubt were quiet and rural retreats, with only a passing stage or mail coach to break in upon their tranquillity.

The attractions of the street are somewhat powerful, it must be owned: the hoarse cries of the knock-'em-downs; the rows of grotesque figures, whose battered masks tell of the inherent pleasure of bashing and smashing, so that to hit an inoffensive old guy on the head with a wooden ball affords a more intense delight than the gaining of oranges or cocoa-nuts. Great, too, are the attractions of the sly little lotteries; of the portable gaming tables, which often appear and disappear in the twinkling of an eye, always surrounded on the instant with a dense impassable crowd. But in spite of all these violent delights there is a strong and steady stream of people of all classes directed to a narrow gateway, where one outside is calling, in the true showman's dialect, "Walk in, walk in; the charge is only threepence. Threepence admits to all the attractions; walk in, if you please, to the People's Palace."

Foremost, of course, among the attractions is the Apprentices' Exhibition. There is music going on in the great hall; there will be a gymnastic show presently, with a concert to follow; dissolving views; and a general round of amusements. But for steady old stagers who have been apprentices themselves once upon a time, there are long galleries filled with excellent but unassuming work, contributed by the bold 'prentice lads of London. Not that all the contributors are formally apprentices, for, as has been already hinted, the system of apprenticeship has rather gone to decay; but anyhow they are all learners of one kind or another—a fair proportion, indeed, have been actually apprenticed by the Jewish Board of Guardians, a voluntary association of the Jewish community, which looks after the poor of the race with a zeal and judgement worthy of all emulation, and cuts at the roots of pauperism by putting out its

poor lads to useful trades. The system was once, indeed, practised by Gentile Boards of Guardians; but what it came to in their hands is told without much exaggeration in the pages of "Oliver Twist."

But here are the young printers first in evidence, with specimens of their setting, composing, and printing; and lithographic printers too, and artists in the same walk, with designs and drawings of merit. Another set of learners show the processes of wood engraving; and other young engravers follow suit with specimens of copper-plate, music, heraldic, bank-note, and other methods whether commercial or artistic.

Then there are bookbinders, showing all kinds of dainty covers for all sorts of books in various states and stages. And for the best of all these specimens—in which the progress of a book may be traced from its first appearance as a printed sheet to its final apotheosis in vellum, roan, morocco, russia, or calf, or to its more modest destiny in cloth or boards—there are appropriate rewards in the way of prizes, and stimulating certificates of merit.

Then there are the decorative arts, which have experienced of late years such an energetic revival, and which offer to the skilful and industrious apprentice such prospects of solid reward in the future.

Here appear the works of engravers on metal, and of wood carvers, with those of art decorators, and designers, with neophytes far too limited in number for the demand of the workshop.

And with them come plasterers and potters, and glass stainers and glass embossers and writers, with ornamental glass painters, and glaziers of the same, while the humble but useful craft of sign writers and ticket writers affords specimens of the show and blazonry of modern advertising efforts.

Of a distinct and distinguished grade are also the corps of instrument-makers for philosophical, mathematical, or surgical purposes—the latter grim and cruel-looking enough, merciful as their object may be—and these last lead naturally to crutches and wooden legs, from a contemplation of which it is a relief to escape to the specimens of instruments constructed by young opticians. Musical instruments come next, with specimens of organ and pianoforte work as well as the rollicking banjo and the martial drum.

As important as any is the class of cabinet makers, with specimens of all kinds of

furniture; and chairmakers and upholsterers, with many of the special varieties of the class from makers of perambulators to designers of coffins, have each a niche in the Exhibition.

General metal-work, too, is promising in the works of its alumni; and the jewellers and workers in precious metals have a class to themselves. Watch and clock-makers in embryo display marvels in movements, wheels, and escapements. And then we come to a display less artistically inviting, but which has its interesting side for the philosopher. "Model of a pair of pantaloons—Horse Guards Blue," gives the keynote of the young tailor's ambition—or, perhaps it is a tailoress, for in this department female handiwork takes its place. Then we have hatters, furriers, weavers, dressmakers and milliners, all of whom have specimens of their craft to exhibit.

Carriage-building, harness-making, the great engineering corps, with machine-makers of various kinds, show 'prentice work of high merit. Then we have draughtsmen and architects in the budding stage, with the building and wood-working trades—of high importance in London, and subject to more violent changes in the way of prosperity and distress than any other, perhaps; but here are those who mean to be the best workmen of their class; and for such there is never lack of employment. Coopers and boat-builders are represented, too. Finally, electricity has, justly, a class to itself with its instrument-makers, for whom the future, no doubt, has much in store. The young wood-turners, too, have their little show; with these a number of minor trades and crafts, each with something to offer in the way of 'prentice work. But the most taking part of the exhibition was contributed by the Palace 'prentices themselves, being a portion of an artistically-furnished drawing-room—cosy, comfortable, and attractive, all done from the design of the instructor of the class, and executed by those under instruction at the Palace: a piece of excellent work all round, which promises well for the future of the technical classes.

But everything comes to an end, even a Boxing Day morning; and with a glance at the fine Queen's Hall, where an interested crowd of East-enders are watching the feats of a well-drilled troupe of amateur gymnasts—they are old friends from the Polytechnic, which has given the new Palace a friendly lead—with the notes of the piano, and the clash of sabres echoing

in the ears, we find our way into the turmoil of the Mile End Road, where all the fun of the fair is proceeding as before.

A CENTURY OF NEWSPAPERS, 1688—1788.

IN the year when the timely advent of a Prince of the House of Nassau delivered us from Popery and wooden shoes, the "Orange Intelligencer" was inaugurated by the Government of the day for the promulgation and support of their policy. Precisely a hundred years later, January the first, 1788, appeared the first number of the "Times"; the century of newspaper history, the more salient characteristics of which will here be briefly noticed, lies conveniently marked by boundaries thus clearly defined.

The "Universal Intelligencer," December, 1688, was, in truth, but a meagre production: it boasted only two advertisements; a brief paragraph described the seizure of Jeffreys attempting to make his escape from his enemies; sixteen lines were devoted to Ireland; half as many to Scotland; and it was announced how, on the seventh of the month, the Prince of Orange, making his way from Torbay to the metropolis, slept at the Bear Inn at Hungerford. Within a period of four years, however, no fewer than twenty-six newspapers made their appearance; the rapid increase being due, to some extent at all events, to the additional facilities afforded by the Post Office, which, originally established by Charles the First, but interrupted by the civil wars, was put upon an improved footing when they came to an end, and still further extended in the reign of William and Mary. But no sooner was the Press emancipated from censorship at the close of the Revolution, than the Government itself fell under the censorship of the Press, and the result of the criticism, which politicians on both sides had to endure from their adversaries, became manifest in increased moderation when in office, and diminished acrimony in opposition; the Press, at length, ceased to be savage. The reign of Queen Anne, commencing March, 1702, witnessed a great development of Press activity; a law was passed granting copyright to authors; the first daily newspaper appeared; persons of position began to contribute to the public prints; but a stamp was imposed

on all newspapers, and a duty upon every advertisement.

With the reign of Anne, the power of curing the King's Evil ceased to be claimed and exercised by English Sovereigns. An advertisement was actually inserted in the "Public Intelligencer," May, 1644, to the effect that, from June to Michaelmas in that year, the King would discontinue, what is presumptuously styled, "the healing of his people," so that all were in this manner warned not to come up to London in the interval, and be put to needless trouble and expense. But though the ceremony of touching ceased, in this country, on the death of Queen Anne, the "Flying Post," April, 1728, announces, under the heading "Bologna," that the "Chevalier de Saint George Hill" performed the ceremony in his chapel. Dr. Johnson—when a boy of five years of age—was brought to town from Lichfield, and, with two hundred others, received the Royal touch, thirtieth of March, 1714; but his recollections of the ceremony in after life were, as may be imagined, somewhat vague.

When the country began once more to breathe freely, and Protestant ascendancy was established under Dutch William, the true value of advertising appears to have first dawned upon the public mind. In the "New Observer," seventeenth of July, 1689, appears the following announcement, bearing on the politics of the time. "Orange cards representing the late King's reign and expedition of the Prince of Orange, namely: My Lord Jefferies in the West hanging of Protestants; the ordinary mass-house, pulling down and burning by Captain Tom and his mobile; the Jesuits scampering, etc., with many other remarkable passages of the times, and effigies of our gracious King William and Queen Mary, curiously engraven in lively figures. Sold by Duncan Newman, printer and publisher of the 'New Observer,'" a journal whose editor was Burnet, the great Protestant Bishop, who wrote the "History of the Reformation," and of his own "Life and Times."

The earliest daily paper which had any lengthened existence was the "Daily Courant," which appeared about the year 1702. In the first number it excused its small size on the ground that it was designed to give all material news as soon as every post arrived, and that it was confined to half the compass of other journals in order to save the public at least half the impertinence of ordinary newspapers.

As early as June, 1695, the "Postboy" had been started as a daily paper. But these early attempts appear to have been by no means successful; and, in 1724, there were but two daily newspapers in existence.

In the papers of this period the foreign intelligence is the fullest and best reported; home news consists of vague rumours, hints, and obscure illusions, thus: "'Tis said the Czar of Muscovy was at the Playhouse on Saturday to see the Opera." "I hear the revel in the Temple will end on Friday next, at which time there will be a masquerade." "They continue to say that we shall bombard Salée in the spring, and so destroy that nest of pirates."—"Postboy," January, 1697.

The cause of this state of things was to be found, probably, in fear of the law, and painful remembrance of the ear of the censorship, rather than in any lack of curiosity or public interest in domestic affairs.

Strange titles were not unfrequently adopted. Thus, in the year 1700, a weekly newspaper was commenced under the title of the "Morning Mercury; or, a Farce of Fools;" and some years later appeared the "British Apollo; or, Curious Amusements for the Ingenious, to which are added the most material occurrences, Foreign and Domestic. Performed by a Society of Gentlemen"—a paper upon which the poet Gay comments as specially recommending itself to notice by deciding wagers at cards.

Quaint titles are to be found, indeed, much later in the century, for, in 1749, appeared a newspaper called, "All Alive and Merry; or, the London Daily Post," a characteristic feature of which was the jests which appeared in its columns; not, indeed, that they were of a very high order.

In 1755 newspapers appeared under the extraordinary titles of the "Devil," "Man," "Old Maid"; and later still we find the "Prater," the "Crabtree," and the "Busybody."

Among distinguished political critics of this period was the author of "Robinson Crusoe," which was first given to the world in the columns of the "London Post," and within forty years went through as many editions.

In 1702, Defoe was sentenced to the pillory for publishing a pamphlet entitled, "A Short Way with the Dissenters." It was, while confined in Newgate on account of this satirical publication, that he started a weekly newspaper, printed on four quarto pages, entitled the "Review of the

Affairs of State"—a journal which he maintained until the imposition of the newspaper tax some nine years later.

Early in the century appeared also the first of a group of publications which, though they contained advertisements, gave occasional intelligence of passing events, and, when the stamp was imposed, suffered equally with their political rivals, yet would not at the present day be accounted newspapers. Of such as the "Tatler"—commenced in 1709 by Addison and Steele, in which the latter wrote many papers under the signature of "Isaac Bickersteth," contributing, indeed, one hundred and sixty-eight out of two hundred and seventy-one papers of which the work consists, and in imitation of which the "Female Tatler," professing to be edited "by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, a lady who knows everything" appeared the same year; others of this class were the "Spectator," "Guardian," "Englishman," and the "Freeholder."

Swift used his ready pen on behalf of the Tories in the columns of the "Examiner"; and Addison sought, through the influence of the "Freeholder," to neutralise the injury inflicted on his party by the fierce invective of the Dean of Saint Patrick's. As a result of this continued war of words, the whole nation became politicians, and "our island which," says the "Freeholder," "was formerly a nation of saints, may now be called a nation of statesmen."

The "Spectator" (No. 452, 1712) thus dilates upon the general thirst for news which had been created and inflamed by the recent wars. "You must have observed that men who frequent coffee-houses are pleased with everything, so it be what they have not heard before. A victory or a defeat is equally agreeable. The shutting of a cardinal's mouth pleases them one post, and the opening of it another. They are glad to hear the French Court is moved to Marli, and are afterwards as much delighted with its return to Versailles. They read the advertisements with the same curiosity as the articles of public news; and are as pleased to hear of a pie bald horse that is strayed out of a field near Islington, as of a whole troop of horse that have been engaged in any foreign adventure."

The year 1712 was of great importance in the newspaper world of the day, when a duty of a halfpenny on every half sheet and a penny on every whole sheet—besides a shilling for each advertisement—was im-

posed upon all newspapers and pamphlets. The havoc committed among existing papers was very great, and many were immediately stopped. "A facetious friend of mine," said Addison, "who loves a pun, calls this present mortality among authors, the fall of the leaf." The authorities were however, disposed to extend favour to some of those who wielded the new source of power; and Steele, who had commenced life as a soldier, was rewarded with the situation of Commissioner of the Stamp Office. Despite his assertions to the contrary, it has been suspected that Swift may have suggested to the Government the imposition of this tax upon the Press.

After the first year or two, this duty was not exacted, and the Stamp Act may perhaps, on the whole, be regarded as having had a wholesome effect in purging the Press, and confining its management to men of character and responsibility. Among papers of note which were extinguished by the operation of the Stamp Act was the "New Observer," the editor of which, John Tutchin, had some years previously fallen under the displeasure of Parliament, and whose enemies eventually had recourse to violence in order to make away with him. For sympathy with Monmouth's rebellion, Tutchin had been sentenced by Jeffreys to be whipped through all the market towns of Dorsetshire.

"He is a young man," said the judge, "but an old rogue." Jeffreys raged at him so, that "no Billingsgate woman could scold worse." "I understand, sir," thundered he, "that you are a poet; pray, sir, let you and I cap verses." It was in reference to the brave manner in which Tutchin bore his frightful flagellations—as Defoe bore his punishment in the pillory—that Pope wrote:—

Earless on high stood unabashed Defoe,
And Tutchin flagrant from the scourge below.

When Jeffreys was committed to the Tower by the Lord Mayor, his former prisoner visited him and enquired of him where his conscience was when he passed that fearful sentence upon him in the West? Soon afterwards a barrel of oysters was sent as a present to Jeffreys in the Tower; but when they were turned out upon the table, a halter fell out with them, which "so palled his stomach that he could eat none of them." The present, it was said, came from Tutchin.

About this period, caricatures began to find their way into the country, and the earliest English caricature on the South

Sea Company is advertised in the "Post-boy," June 21, 1720, under the title of the "Bubblers Bubbled, or, the Devil take the Hindmost."

These were days when every conceivable thing was put up to raffle, and thus we see advertisements headed, "a sixpenny sale of lace;" "a penny adventure for a great pie;" "threepenny sales of houses;" gloves, chocolate, Hungary water, Indian goods, lacquered ware, fans, etc., were notified to be thus disposed of, and the mob of the fair was called together to draw their tickets by the same means. Playful announcements, redolent of humour, appeared in the "Tablet," thus: "any ladies who have any particular stories of their acquaintance which they are willing privately to make public, may send them by the penny post to Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.: enclosed to Mr. John Morphen, near Stationers' Hall." A lion's mouth truly wherein to drop morsels of scandal.

The brutal character of the customs and amusements, too generally prevalent, may be gathered from paragraphs containing the intelligence of the day.

Skittle grounds, in and about Westminster were closed by order of the Middlesex Magistrates, as tending to induce servants and apprentices to idle away their masters' time and embezzle their money. Cock matches sometimes lasted a week, and there are references to bull-baiting, and, worse still, to dressing-up mad bulls with fireworks, in order that they might be worried with dogs.

Here is a characteristic announcement, at the close of the year 1712, unchecked by the duty charges: "This is to give notice that there is a young woman born within 30 miles of London will run for £50 or £100, a mile and a half, with any other woman that has lived a year within the same distance; upon any good ground, as the parties concerned may agree to."

Public combats between women were likewise exhibited; the precaution that each should hold half-a-crown in her hands being exacted, in order to prevent scratching.

Between the years 1680 and 1786, when the slave trade was abolished, the infamous traffic in negroes tore from their homes and transferred to Jamaica alone no fewer than nine hundred and ten thousand Africans; as a result, negroes became quite common in England, and altogether displaced their Oriental or Moorish predecessors. In the "Tablet," 1709, a

negro boy is thus offered for sale: "A black boy, twelve years of age, fit to wait on a gentleman, to be disposed of at Dennis' coffee house in Finch Lane near the Royal Exchange;" and nineteen years later, the home trade was still flourishing, for the "Daily Journal," September 1728, announces: "To be sold, a Negro boy, aged eleven years. Enquire of the Virginia Coffee-house, Threadneedle St., behind the Royal Exchange."

Notices of marriage were in the days whereof we write published in a form which would assuredly excite astonishment at the present day. For example, in the year 1731, we are informed that "the Rev. Mr. Staines, of York, twenty-six years of age, had been married to a Leicestershire lady, upwards of eighty years old, with whom he was to have £8000 and £300 a year, and a coach and four during life only." It will be remarked that several important points are in this announcement left undecided.

The following obituary notices are likewise of contemporary date: "Died, last week at Acton, George Villess, Esq, formerly page of preference to Queen Anne, said to have died worth £30,000.—Mr. Ridley, a paymaster serjeant, as he was drinking a pint of beer at the Savoy.—On Friday, Mr. Feverel, master of the Bear and Rummer tavern, Gerard St., who was head cook to King William and Queen Anne, reputed worth £40,000."

In 1731 appeared the first number of the "Gentleman's Magazine," which still exists as the oldest periodical in the British Empire, or, probably, in the world. At the period of its first issue, the actual number of journals published in London was twenty-two, and in the provinces, twenty-three, and it was started by Edward Cave, printer, of Saint John's Gate, Clerkenwell, an intimate friend of Dr. Johnson. If we except the meagre reports which appeared from about the time of the accession of George the First, down to 1737, in "Boyce's Register," the "Gentleman's Magazine" was the first publication in which—and only then after the close of each session—appeared a record of the debates in Parliament. Cave, with one or two friends, obtained admission to the Houses, and took notes of what they heard, subsequently adjourning to a neighbouring tavern to compare and amplify the record. The work of reproducing speeches from these crude memoranda devolved upon other hands; and in November, 1740, Dr.

Johnson—himself but once in the gallery of the House of Commons—succeeded Guthrie, who wrote a history of England which nobody ever reads, as writer of Parliamentary speeches for the "Gentleman's Magazine;" as he was himself followed, March, 1743, by a successful student of his style, Dr. Hawkesworth. These reports of the proceedings of Parliament were headed, "Debates in the Senate of Lilliput;" and such was the risk attendant on their production, that they were announced as published by the printer's nephew.

The story, told by Sir John Hawkins, relative to Johnson's report of a speech by Pitt, must not be passed unnoticed. Johnson, Wedderburn, Francis, and a party of gentlemen were dining one day with Foote, when a particular speech of Mr. Pitt was referred to as the best which he had ever delivered. As the chorus of praise subsided, Johnson remarked: "That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter Street!" The company were lavish in their compliments, one, in particular, extolling Johnson's impartiality, remarked, "that he had dealt out reason and eloquence with an equal hand to both parties." "That is not quite true, sir," said Johnson. "I saved appearances well enough; but I took care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it!"

We have now arrived at the era distinguished in the newspaper history of the period by the appearance of Henry Fielding, "the prose Homer of human nature," as a writer—zealous in defence of the House of Brunswick—in the columns of the "True Patriot." His merciless ridicule of the Jacobites, and vehement advocacy of the claims of the reigning dynasty, to which he was heart and soul attached, procured for him the appointment of Magistrate at Bow Street. Fielding died at Lisbon, October, 1754, at the comparatively early age of forty-seven, a victim to the irregularities of earlier life. On the day on which he quitted London for Portugal, he records, in his Journal, how the most melancholy sun he ever beheld arose and found him waking. "For by the light of this sun," he continues, "I was, in my own opinion, last to behold and take leave of some of those on whom I doted with mother-like fondness, unhardened by all the doctrines of that philosophical school where I had learned to bear pain, and despise death. I submitted entirely to Nature, and she made as great a fool of me as she had ever done of any woman whatever;

under pretence of giving me leave to enjoy, she drew me in to suffer, the company of my little ones during eight hours; and I doubt whether, in that time, I did not undergo more than in all my distemper."

The year 1745 witnessed the commencement of the "General Advertiser," a successful attempt to rely for support upon advertisements alone. Theatres now began to make themselves more conspicuous, for this was the dawn of the era of Foote, Macklin, and Garrick. But people had been thoroughly frightened by the great earthquake at Lisbon; masquerades had been forbidden by law; puppet shows, rope-dancing, and china auctions grew scarcer and scarcer, so that the gaieties and follies of the town ceased gradually, from this time, to proclaim themselves through the medium of advertisements.

In November, 1758, Johnson devoted a number of the "Tatler" to an essay on the newspaper people of the day. The journals who opposed the "great Cham's" party had gained an amount of influence very distasteful to upholders of absolutist doctrines. Quoting the sarcastic definition of the functions of an ambassador as a "man of virtue, sent abroad to tell lies for the advantage of his country," he adds an antithesis of his own, to the effect that a "News-writer is a man without virtue, who writes lies at home for profit." "Journals are daily multiplied," continues the Lexicographer, "without increase of knowledge. The tale of the morning paper is told in the evening, and the narratives of the evening are brought again in the morning, so that the most eager pursuer of news is tired before he has completed his labour; and many a man who enters the coffee-house in his nightgown and slippers, is called away to his shop, or his dinner, before he has well considered the state of Europe."

"Lord Bute called on me," says Bubb Dodington in his Diary, "and we had much talk about setting up a paper;" the result of this conference was that May twenty-ninth, 1762, Smollett, author of "Roderick Random" and of the continuation of Hume's History of England, brought out a newspaper called the "Briton," and it was no secret that the funds for its support were supplied by Lord Bute, who was at the time Prime Minister to George the Third. Eight days after the appearance of Smollett's paper, the "North Briton" came out under the editorship of Wilkes, supported by Lord Temple, and by Churchill, the poet.

Ere six months elapsed, the first-named journal ceased to exist, but the latter made its way gradually until in the celebrated number forty-five, Wilkes declared that falsehood had been uttered in the King's speech on the opening of Parliament, 1762, upon which a general warrant was issued against the authors of the libel.

Churchill entered Wilkes' room at the very moment when he was being apprehended, and only escaped in consequence of the presence of mind with which Wilkes addressed him.

"Good morning, Mr. Thompson," said the quick-witted prisoner; "how does Mrs. Thompson do? Does she dine in the country?"

Churchill was quick to take the hint.

"Mrs. Thompson," he replied, "is waiting for me, and I only called for a moment to say, 'how d'ye do!'"

The poet retired into the country, and escaped all search. After a long debate, general warrants were declared illegal, and the Law Courts gave heavy damages against those who had arrested Wilkes, his printer, and publisher, under the insufficient authority of a ministerial order. Horace Walpole, in one of his letters, relates a pillory scene in connection with the "North Briton." "Williams, the ex-printer of the 'North Briton,'" he says, "stood in the pillory to-day—February the fourteenth, 1765—in Palace Yard. He went in a hackney coach, the number of which was forty-five. The mob erected a gallows opposite him, on which they hung a boot—a jack boot, alluding to Lord Bute's Christian name. A collection was then made for Williams, amounting to near two hundred pounds, and the money placed in a blue bag, trimmed with orange, the colours of the revolution."

The two following advertisements extracted from papers of the period, may be commended to the attention of those who are in the habit of expressing opinions as to the decadence of the British soldier, and the peculiar unpopularity of modern military service.

"Deserted, from the 16th regiment of Dragoons, William Bevan, aged 16 years, about 5 feet 5 inches high; stoops a good deal as he walks, and but very indifferently made; whoever apprehends him, shall receive," etc.

"The Royal Regiment of Horse Guards, commanded by Right Hon. Marquis of Granby, is willing to entertain any young man under 23 years of age, having a good

character, straight, and well made. Apply to the Quartermaster, etc."

Shortly after the middle of the last century, the "Public Ledger" was started by Newbery, of St. Paul's Churchyard, soon to number among its contributors, under the name "A Citizen of the World," a literary man, no less distinguished than Oliver Goldsmith. Chatterton wrote for both political parties; but the sums the hapless youth received for newspaper work, as shown by memoranda found in his pocket book after his decease, were small enough, thus:—Received, "Foreign Journal," two shillings; "Middlesex Journal," eight shillings and sixpence.

The excitement connected with the "North Briton" was followed, a few years afterwards, by a feeling no less intense, roused by the letters of "Junius." At this time leading articles appearing, as we now see them, punctually day by day, were unknown, and unpaid volunteers who commented boldly on political events, adopted a signature.

The first of this series of seventy letters appeared in the "Public Advertiser," on the twenty-third of April, 1767; and the last on the second of November, 1771. Though there is, even now, no absolute certainty as to the author, the opinion is all but universal that the writer was Sir Philip Francis. Lord Campbell considered the evidence in favour of the identity of "Junius" with Francis to be so strong that any jury would pronounce a verdict in his favour; and Macaulay and Brougham have alike recorded their conviction that, if Francis be not the author of the letters, no reliance can ever be placed upon circumstantial evidence.

In connection with the name of Junius occurs that of Henry Woodfall, printer of the "Public Advertiser," who, when only five years of age, received half-a-crown from Pope in approval of the correctness with which the boy read to him a page of Homer in the original Greek.

Garrick was one of the shareholders of this paper, and Nichols, speaking of it in his "Literary Anecdotes," says that it was regarded as freehold estate, and that shares in it were sold by auction as regularly as those of the New River Company. Between January, 1769, and December, 1771—during which period the Junius letters appeared—the circulation rose from seventy-four thousand eight hundred to eighty-three thousand nine hundred and fifty. These were the days when Fleet marriages

and the scandals consequent upon them were in full swing, and a number of the "Weekly Journal" states that:

"After an inspection of marriage registers, kept within the rules of the Fleet Prison, no less than thirty-two couples appeared to have been joined together within four days, though the Act of Parliament assigned a penalty of two hundred pounds on every minister so offending, and one hundred pounds each on persons thus married in contravention of the statute. It is reported that one clergyman, at least, makes five hundred pounds per annum of Divinity jobs after that manner."

The following is a fair specimen of the kind of advertisements published by these gentlemen:

"G.R.—At the True Chapel, at the Old Red Hand and Mitre, three doors up Fleet Lane, and next door to the White Swan, marriages are performed by authority, by Rev. Mr. Symson, educated at the University of Cambridge, and late Chaplain to the Earl of Rothes. N.B.—Without imposition."

Dramatic criticism only found its way into the newspapers in the days of Foote, whose sketches of contemporary journalism, as for instance in *The Bankrupt*, *The Capuchin*, and *the Patron*, are exaggerated with much bitterness of temper and grossness of caricature. Prior to 1770, indeed, editors paid—in one case, at least, as much as two hundred pounds annually—for intelligence as to what was going on at the respective houses, and would reward the messenger who first brought them the copy of a playbill with a shilling or half-a-crown. It is said that when duly-qualified representatives were first sent by newspapers to the pit of the theatre and to the Bedford Coffee House, they were received with implacable hostility.

In 1782, Sheridan, nine years after his marriage with Miss Linley, "the fair maid of Bath," started a weekly newspaper called the "Jesuit," with the object of holding up to ridicule the Tory administration of Lord Shelburne, a course which resulted in an action for libel being brought against the printer. The Government, meantime, resigned, and the party which the "Jesuite" supported succeeded to power, Sheridan himself filling the office of Secretary to the Treasury. The prosecution was nevertheless suffered to proceed, with the result that the printer of the "Jesuit," who had nothing whatever to do with writing the incrim-

inated article, was imprisoned for twelve months without receiving sympathy or attention of any kind from Sheridan or his party, who were in the plenitude of political power. But it is time to announce the publication of the journal, whose appearance was to be the goal of this present notice, and record the issue, First of January, 1788, of the first number of the "Times," by John Walter, of Printing House Square, in continuation of the "Daily Universal Register," of which nine hundred and thirty-nine numbers had previously appeared. With the object of diminishing the number of orthographical errors, both papers were printed logographically, that is to say, stereotyped words and portions of words were used instead of separate metal letters. Much merriment was indulged in at the expense of the new plan; it was obvious that an assortment of words suitable for the production of a volume of sermons, for instance, would not avail to print a work on geography or a series of philosophical transactions, and it was said that orders such as the following would be sent to the type founder, "please forward a hundred weight, made up in separate pounds, of "honourable gentlemen, loud cheers, gracious majesty, fearful calamity, alarming explosion, etc, etc." The new venture made no sensation in the world, nor gave any indication of future power; indeed, for fifteen years subsequent to its first appearance the circulation did not exceed one thousand copies daily. Although there was a notice of the previous evening's performance both at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, foreign as well as home intelligence, poetry, shipping news, and paragraphs of gossip, some of them somewhat doubtful in character, there was not a line in the shape of a leading article, nor was there any review of books. This advantage, however, over contemporary journals the "Times" always had, namely, that its price was threepence, while only twopence half-penny was charged for the others.

An admirable description of the "folio of four pages," the newspaper of his day, about 1788, is given by the poet of Olney, in the "Task," with which the present notice concludes.

What is it but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations and its vast concerns?

Cataracts of declamation thunder here;
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wander lost;

The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks,

And lilies for the brows of faded age;
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heaven, earth, and ocean plundered of their sweets,
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons and City feasts, and favourite airs,
Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katterfelto with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER V.—CELIA'S LOVER.

THERE was a small dinner-party at River Gate that evening. It was not a very happy evening to any one concerned, except, perhaps, to the Canon, who liked giving dinner parties. Mrs. Percival was painfully aware that her son Vincent had come back from his boating in a very bad temper. At first she suspected that this must be because of Paul, and that the secret of the engagement had leaked out somehow. But she soon perceived that Vincent and Paul were quite as little interested in each other as they had been at Easter. They were both watching Celia, to be sure: Vincent silently and sulkily; Paul silently and sadly: he had not yet had a chance of speaking to her alone, and thought this party a real piece of barbarity. He supposed they thought that he was made of patience. Then his meditations took the form of an admiration of Celia, which grew more ecstatic every moment. How wonderfully good she was! How unselfish; how kind! How prettily she talked to the old men; how sweetly she amused the old ladies; how amiably she listened to that awful ass young Jackson, the new Minor Canon, and even played his accompaniment while he sang a song full of "Darling"—the horrid fool—looking at her all the time. It bored her to tears, that was plain; for she got up instantly, hardly waiting to be thanked by the hopeless idiot, who was left standing by the piano, and came straight down the room, and stopped where Paul was planted behind a table. It was covered with some of Mrs. Percival's most precious curiosities, which he had been carefully examining one by one. Celia lingered a moment by the table, and looked up at him, smiling. He little knew what his lady-love really was, or the trouble in her heart just then, and he looked at her as if he cared to know nothing but his own love, and pride, and delight in her.

"It isn't all for money," thought the strange girl, trying to explain herself a little. "He is such a dear fellow. But he has stolen his eyes from some woman. His mother must have been lovely."

It seemed to her that she had forgotten Paul's face in the weeks he had been away, and had only remembered his other possessions.

"I shall be very happy," she thought, while he looked at her. "I wish this horrid worry had never happened."

"What are you doing all alone here?" she said to him softly. "Why don't you sing, or play, or something? Do—just to show that poor little man what singing is."

But a triumph over Mr. Jackson seemed to Paul quite unnecessary. Unlike many musical people, he was generous about other people's music.

"He's not so bad—except in his style of songs," he said.

"And I dared to play before you—I, who can't play two right notes. Poor thing, how you must have suffered! Why didn't you come and do it for me?"

"Next time I will, if it's Jackson," said Paul; and Celia laughed.

"Do go and talk to Mrs. Archdeacon," she said, and was moving away, but he stopped her.

"I have a hundred things to say. Will you come out into the garden to-night, when they are all gone? There is a moon—just for a few minutes," he added quickly, for it was easy to see that she did not mean to say yes.

A sort of pained anxiety seemed to put out the light in his face.

"Am I never to have a chance of speaking to you?" he said in a whisper, leaning on the table, while she turned half away.

"Oh, don't you be unreasonable," she said, with an emphasis he did not understand. "You must trust me—I thought you did!"

"I would trust you with my soul!"

"Then don't bother about the garden," said Celia lightly; but her look and smile were quite reassuring, and scattered his troubles at once to the wind.

After all, he did not know what they were. The engagement was still a secret; therefore Celia was of course quite right. Some girls would have defied the chance of being found out; the talk of servants; possibly the prowling of that odious Vincent. His noble Celia was too wise for that. She had left him now, and was laughing with the Archdeacon over the cartoon in

"Punch." The light fell on her fair, bright head, and flashed in little sparkles on the shiny ornaments of her black dress, which made her pretty arms and neck look even whiter than usual. Her eyes smiled on every one; but so unaffected and unconscious was she in her happiness, that no one could have guessed that she knew how desperately two men in the room were in love with her. The Archdeacon certainly thought himself her chief admirer, though he half suspected a rival in young Jackson. That youth, evidently, was not good enough for her, and he himself was married. However, there was no harm in spinning out the interest of "Punch" as long as possible. Meanwhile Paul, a little shamed by the unselfishness of his love, left the table of "objets d'art," and went to talk to Mrs. Archdeacon, who received him kindly, and asked questions about Switzerland.

Poor Paul! Celia might well ask him to trust her, for altogether she treated him very badly that first evening of his return. She wished him good night before everybody, and went upstairs with her aunt. And then his disappointments were not quite over, for when he wandered out, in a very sentimental frame of mind, to the moonlit terrace under her window, he found that some one was there before him. Vincent, sitting in a garden-chair, smoking. Considering that the night was by no means a summer night, and that Vincent was a shivery Indian, Paul thought this the most ridiculous sight he had ever seen. Perhaps Vincent suspected something, and did not think the match good enough for his cousin; besides, it was plain enough that he did not like him. Anyhow, there would be no peace or freedom till Vincent was gone. Paul walked quietly away, giving up his hour on the terrace. But, thinking of the afternoon, and putting things together, he began to dislike Vincent as cordially as his kind nature could.

The next morning things were rather better. The respectable, old-fashioned world of Woolsborough was waked by its chiming bells to a Sunday of glorious sunshine, still, serene, and veiled in golden mists which rolled off gradually.

Paul ran down the broad old staircase at River Gate; all the doors were open, and the house was full of sweet morning air, and smelling of roses, though a little of autumn too.

The tall dining-room windows stood open on the terrace. As Paul came into the room, Celia too came in from that outside

Paradise of soft light and flowers. She was dressed in white that morning, with a knot of red carnations fastened at her throat. Paul's moment had come at last; and he could say: "Now you are all my own!" without being interfered with or heard by any one but his love herself. She was not demonstrative, certainly; but he thought nothing of that at the time.

"Why were you so cruel to me last night?" he said; but then she freed the hand he was holding, and pushed him gently away with both of them, and would hardly give him one of her red carnations, though he begged for it humbly.

"Dear, how beautiful you are!" said Paul, when he had got his carnation, and had become a little more reasonable, as Celia called it. "And I let you send me away for the whole summer! You will never do that again."

"Hush!" she said, for the footman was coming in with a tray. She was sitting now in a large chair by the window, and Paul was standing opposite to her; she had refused to go out into the garden. She did not herself think that she was looking at all pretty that morning; even Celia, as she rashly trusted to nature to keep her beautiful, could not be quite proof against the ravages of a bad night. But then, she never had a bad night: this was her first experience of such a horror, except the night after her father died.

"What are you going to do to-day?" said Paul. "Cathedral all day, I suppose? I shall ask old Chanter if he will let me play this afternoon."

Dr. Chanter, the Cathedral organist, a genius in his way, and an autocrat, was Paul's chief friend at Woolsborough.

"Will you give up the Cathedral to-day," said Celia, when they were alone again, "and do something for me?"

She was looking at him anxiously; some shadow of trouble had found its way into her eyes that morning, as Paul now began to see.

"What is the matter, dear?" he asked with sudden eagerness. "Of course! What can I do?"

"Oh Paul, you will think me such an odd girl," she said. "I am going to treat you so badly. I want you to go away to-day, to go off somewhere for a long walk, I mean, and not come back till the evening. Will you do this to please me, without my telling you why?"

One need hardly say that Celia knew the nature she had to do with; she knew that an appeal like this would touch its

highest point. Still, it was a hard thing to ask of her young lover, who had been banished from her all the summer, and had scarcely yet seen or spoken to her since he came to Woolsborough. Paul looked at her imploringly; her eyes as they met his were mysterious, and told him nothing, except that she meant what she said. He made a little movement towards her; but then the Canon's dignified step was heard slowly coming downstairs.

"Do you love me, Celia?" said Paul. "If you do, it is all right, and I will give you my life itself."

"Don't make conditions," she said. "I don't want your life. There is another red pink for you."

And then the Canon came creaking in, with his satisfied smile, and his half-confidential "*Good morning, young people!*"

Then came Mrs. Percival, really kind, happy and smiling, and breakfast was very pleasant, though Celia had just turned Paul out of Paradise. In her presence, Paul was a little shy with the elder people, and she herself that morning did not seem inclined much to talk; but Vincent did not appear, so that there was nothing discordant.

Afterwards Paul went off through the garden, and across the ferry, without a word to any one of his intentions.

When the Cathedral bells had nearly done ringing, and Canon Percival, looking very handsome in his surplice and college cap, had started off across the broad sunshine of the Close, Celia came down and overtook her aunt at the door. Vincent had not yet appeared; but his mother had seen him, and explained that he had a headache.

"I felt rather angry with him last night," said Mrs. Percival. "He kept you out too late on the river. It was hard on Paul. He behaved like an angel, though."

"He is angelic," said Celia quietly. "But Vincent didn't know."

"No; very true." As Mrs. Percival said this, she determined in her own mind that she would tell Vincent before he went away. "And where is Paul now?" she asked. "Not escaped to Dr. Chanter already?"

"Paul? I can't exactly tell you where he is now. He has gone off for a long walk somewhere."

"Really, Celia? How odd! how very unlike him!"

"Between ourselves, Aunt Flo," said Celia rather haughtily, and with a slight

effort, "it was not his own wish. I sent him."

"You sent him! Why?"

"You are clever enough to guess my reasons."

"You think Vincent will guess if he sees too much of Paul. Well, my dear, if he does, I think that it would be better so than that you should make a sacrifice of Paul."

But as she spoke there sprang a keen suspicion into Mrs. Percival's mind. Was there anything underhand in Celia's affairs? Could anything possibly be going on between her and Vincent about which the elders knew nothing? He certainly had come in very dismal from the river, and his behaviour all the evening had been singular in its rudeness. She quite believed that he knew nothing of Celia's engagement; but had Celia misled him in any way on that subject? Naturally, perhaps, Mrs. Percival felt sure that her son, and not her niece, must be the injured person. Women, she would have argued smilingly, can always take better care of themselves than poor dear men. However, as the deep shadow of the Cathedral porch received herself and Celia, Mrs. Percival resolved to say nothing more till the evening; and then, if things led up to it, to have an explanation with her son.

Meanwhile, Paul had left the city and river far behind him—Cathedral, and organ, and chapter; old elms in the Close; red gateways; beetling old windows; narrow streets full of smart shop-people in "Sunday garments glittering gay"; back lanes and courts, where dirty men and women crouched on doorsteps, untouched by the grand religious influences which for so many centuries had governed the town, deaf to the meaning of the bells that clanged from a dozen steeples in rivalry of the deeper chime of the Cathedral—the Woolsborough Sunday was left behind, only its bells following the truant for miles, that still autumn day, and the scent of the River Gate garden going with him always in Celia's red flowers. He was not thinking of much besides Celia, as he walked westward across meadows and through the green luxuriant lanes where blackberries were ripening, and leaves beginning to be tinted with the last glories of the year. He was not unhappy, and it never occurred to him to be angry with Celia, though she had sent him away from her for a whole long day. He was one of those people of a dreamy disposition, who can always be happy alone. The strong

passions and excitements of life, which they share with other human beings, seldom come to people like this without bringing them pain, all the sharper for their seeming indifference: these sleepy natures suffer terribly when they are awaked, but they enjoy intensely too. Still they seem to find their true happiness—perhaps content is the right word—in following their own pursuits quietly.

Before Paul fell in love with Celia, he used to tease Canon Percival a good deal about those dwellers in the back lanes of Woolsborough. He wished very much to talk to the Dean about it, and to have a Minor Canon sent out from the Cathedral, with a few chosen choristers, to hold an open-air service on the quay, at the foot of a certain steep dark street running down to the river. Then he saw in his mind's eye a procession headed by these choristers, in which all sorts of strange beings would be led gradually up the street, on across the Close, into the Cathedral itself. Why was that great church built, if not to gather souls like these? But Paul's arguments did not commend themselves to the Canon, who smiled blandly, and remembered an engagement. Mrs. Percival was much more sympathetic, and sighed over impossibilities. Celia, when she came, gave no sympathy at all. She would not even listen to such dreams, but quietly put herself in place of them.

Paul walked on across country, that Sunday morning, in a sort of vague golden atmosphere made of thoughts of Celia. He understood pretty well that he was sent out of the way of that sulky Vincent. He thought it was rather a pity, and could not quite see why the thing should have been hidden at all. If Vincent did not like it, what could that matter? It was no affair of his. Celia was not his sister; the fact that his father and mother had been very good to her, did not give him a right to be consulted. Paul's reason told him all this, but he would not have expressed it to Celia. He was obeying her wish, and that was enough: the time of trial would soon be over now.

Paul walked on through that peaceful, pastoral country, never lonely, though so still. The villages, which he avoided, lay to right and left of him; the deep meadows were full of cattle, feeding; the old red farmsteads lay half-asleep in the sun, in the middle of their loaded orchards; and the church bells answered each other across the stretches of shining, shadowy plain. He

had started before ten o'clock, and two hours' walking brought him to one of the most picturesque villages in the country. There was nothing new to be seen there; the houses, set, as it seemed, in masses of many-coloured flowers, were all built of grey stone, a few whitewashed—nearly all roofed with beautiful old thatch. The church and churchyard were set on the side of a hill; its small wooden steeple was silent when Paul got there, for service was going on. The hand of restoration had touched this church very gently, only helping it to bear its weight of years; for it was one of the oldest, and, to some people's eyes, the most beautiful, in all the country-side. Some one had planted a rose by the porch, which was now climbing all over the roof, mixing with the ivy it found there. The small, sloping churchyard was fenced with a stone wall, lovely in itself, with a yellow and green embroidery of moss and fern. Two old yews laid their heavy shadow on the graves, especially the older ones; out in a patch of sunshine were the newer graves, with fresh wreaths upon them. Behind the village, above the churchyard, the country suddenly changed its character, breaking into a ridge of hills, from the highest of which—a wild sheep-walk, partly clothed with bracken, and crowned with fir-trees—one looked down first on a very great house, in a park, belonging to a certain Sir John Lefroy, and then on a wide westerly view beyond, bounded by blue hills which suggested Wales.

Paul was rather hot and tired when he reached the little village. He crossed the stone stile into the churchyard, and walked softly on the grass to the entrance of the low, dark porch. He had heard the people singing as he came along the road; they were singing still, not very musically, to the groaning of an organ badly played. Presently, as Paul listened, they stopped, and the sermon began. Paul knew something of the nice old Vicar of the place, whose sermons matched his church excellently well. But this morning a harsh, new voice startled him unpleasantly. Some strange clergyman began preaching on the Creeds of the Church. Their days were numbered, in his opinion; but he spoke of them with a kindly air of patronage, and advised his hearers—the old blacksmith, the carpenter's wife, the waggoner and his family—to bear with them for the present: "till you and I can make something better for ourselves."

Paul, though a young Oxford man and a thinker in his way, turned impatiently from the church door, and was crossing the path on his way to the upper stile, when a man came out of the church with such hasty strides that he ran against him and nearly knocked him down.

"Mille pardons, monsieur!" he exclaimed in great confusion, adding thus to Paul's amazement. He recovered himself instantly, however.

"It is I who must apologise," Paul said in English. "You naturally did not expect to find me there."

"Mon Dieu, non!"

Paul was glad to find himself understood. He looked at his new acquaintance with some interest and curiosity, as they both turned off across the grass in the same direction, passing open windows, through which the advanced doctrines of the preacher still fell upon their ears. By mutual consent they were silent till they had climbed the slope to the stile beyond the church, which led to a path crossing the hills.

The Frenchman walked on a pace or two in front of Paul, who remembered, as he followed him, that the Lefroys were Roman Catholics, and had a good many foreign connections. This might account for what seemed at first such a strange phenomenon.

This foreigner was a good deal older than Paul; a man of forty, or rather more. He was dressed in an English suit of light tweed, in which he looked odd, somehow. But he was unquestionably a good-looking man; tall and broad, with a short, fair beard and fierce moustache, and particularly amiable, gentle blue eyes. In his younger days he had been considered the handsomest man in Paris. In fact, he owed his wife to his good looks and charming disposition, for he was a poor man, though the head of one of the oldest and noblest families in France.

When they had reached the top of the hill, he turned round smiling to Paul, and began to make another apology, this time in English, which he spoke remarkably well.

"I am perfectly desolated and crushed by my rudeness," he said. "I also disturbed the poor dear congregation, who were listening like the best of sheep to that oversetting sermon."

"They could not understand it, I should think, luckily," said Paul. "I came in for a few sentences, which seemed to me very ignorant nonsense."

"Well, I am glad we agree. You are perhaps a Catholic, sir?"

"No; not in your sense," said Paul.

"Well, forgive me. I shall understand in time. My catastrophe to-day was a punishment, I must tell you. Let me explain. I am staying at the Hall down there—with sort of cousins, the Lefroys. But you are acquainted, no doubt?"

"This is not my country. I only know Sir John Lefroy by name."

"Ah—pardon—well, yesterday evening there was a party at dinner, and a very charming English lady was kind enough to inform me about the Church of England, which she said was purely and simply another branch of ours. She begged me to attend the services to-day, and to judge for myself. We had our own mass this morning, of course, in my cousin's chapel. Afterwards I kept my promise, and visited the village church. All I will say is that I do not see much resemblance."

He smiled pleasantly, and shrugged his shoulders.

"But you must not judge by what you heard this morning," said Paul. "That gentleman is one of our new lights, I suppose. To me they are all rather illogical—but he is worse than that."

"Many people will not believe in a creed of his making?"

"I should think not—but I suppose he will be satisfied if he believes in it himself."

"And it is all like that. Then my pretty friend was mocking me."

"No; I don't think so," said Paul.

It was a puzzling position to be placed in suddenly, the position of apologist for the English Church. However, Paul was good at argument: and he had not to do with a bigot or a specialist, but with an amiable, liberal, and perfectly courteous man. They crossed the stile and slowly climbed the hill. Under the fir-trees at the top they sat down, and talked for a long time. Presently they heard the chatter and tramp of the congregation coming out of church, but no one came their way; they sat in the hot, still shade—there was not even wind enough to make music in the branches above them—and they talked on, passing from religious questions to politics, and then to more personal matters, till they had actually talked themselves into a sort of friendship. It was, of course, the Frenchman's doing; he was the most friendly and sociable of men; and he had

taken a fancy to Paul in the moment that they met so strangely at the church-door. It was not very wonderful. Paul was cultivated, he was thoughtful and clever, he was a little old-fashioned in his manners and talk, and he was not limited by any suspicion of foreigners. He liked older men than himself, and had preferred Colonel Ward, till now, to any of his younger friends, of whom in fact he had not many. With such men, if they suited him, he was not boyish and shy, as women often found him; or odd and dismal, as some men thought him. Paul, at his best, was a young man worth knowing, and worth talking to; but not very many people were aware of this.

Before they parted, Paul had told the Frenchman about his old home in Surrey; and the Frenchman had told him that he, too, had an old house of his own down in the west of France, but almost too ruinous to be inhabited, except in the height of summer. He also told Paul that his wife had died several years ago, and that he had one child, a daughter of fourteen; but Paul's confidence did not go quite to this length, and he said nothing about Celia.

At last they were disturbed by the clanging of a bell from the great house in the park.

"I must go," said Paul's new friend; "but first, my dear sir, let us know each other's name," and he handed Paul a card on which the inscription looked very splendid. "M^{rs}. de la Tour-Montmirail."

"Thank you very much," said Paul. "I haven't got a card. My name is Romaine—Paul Romaine."

"That is not hard to remember," said Monsieur de Montmirail. "And you are staying at Woolsborough? I hope we shall meet again."

He bowed, and then took Paul's fingers for a moment, smiling: then bowed again, and walked off with rather careful steps down the rough side of the hill.

Paul sat where he had left him for some time longer, gazing at the wide blue view, thinking of the queer encounter and all they had talked about. Then he suddenly found out that he was very hungry, and he left his hill-top and went down into the village, where he got some bread and cheese at the little inn, before starting off by a long roundabout way back to Woolsborough. If he did not reappear before six o'clock, he supposed Celia would be satisfied.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 1001. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1888.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER V.

CHARACTERISTIC CORRESPONDENCE.

AFTER these three chapters explaining the kind of informal engagement between May and Hugh, we return to the date at which our story opens.

Why should the worthiest women worship so often the most worthless of men? A little girl often prefers a bald, broken-nosed, wooden wreck of a doll to all her exquisitely-dressed and featured "men of wax," and she grows up to show the same morbid preference for the most worthless of her admirers, as a maiden; and of her sons, as a mother.

Anyhow, we have no better reason than this to give for the worship which his mother and sister lavished on Fred Beresford, an irredeemably worthless youth. Perhaps it was their worship which caused his worthlessness, and not his worthlessness which evoked their worship—or, in a word, perhaps he was spoiled. And so, no doubt, he was; but spoiling, if it makes a man selfish, does not make him mean and sly, as Fred was, in spite of his genial, frank, and pleasant manner. Besides, spoiling could hardly make him more selfish than he was by nature. Such as he was, however, he was worshipped by both his mother and sister, who set down those of his faults which they could see to the thoughtlessness of youth, and even to its generosity; for Fred had a happy knack of inventing such generous or affectionate reasons for his most selfish acts, as took in completely these ingenuous worshippers.

"Trinity College, Cambridge.

"DEAR OLD MAY,—Thanks, awfully, for the money, which took me out of an ugly hole. I hope it didn't cost you another dress, as I want you to look your best for Gower, who is already in love with your photo! I fancy it was the sight of it that made him so keen about coming, as I wasn't at all pressing in my invitation, for I knew that the 'gov.' would cut up rough about it. He seems to think I can live in College without knowing any one, or spending anything; but a fellow must be as slow as a snail to live in his shell here, and that, you know, is not in my line at all. I can't help making friends; and, of course, I have to be friendly in turn; though this, to tell you the truth, was not my only—or my chief—reason for asking Gower down. I thought he would put a bit of life into the house, and amuse you—I am sure you want it, with no one to speak to but that dismal little Spratt, who is as slow as a hearse horse; so I asked Gower as the most likely of our lot to enliven you. Watch your chance, like a dear old woman, to coax the 'gov.' into sending me some money, as I am frightfully hard up, and really hardly know how I'm to get home. It wouldn't do to ask Gower for a loan, as it would look too like demanding payment for his lodging; wouldn't it? Yet I really don't know how else to raise twenty pounds; I don't indeed. I cannot tell you how mean I felt in having to ask you again for your allowance; and I shall be just miserable till I can pay you back. Now, twenty pounds from the 'gov.' would lighten a little of this load, as well as free me here and frank me home. Do coax him into sending it, May, dear. He can't refuse you anything. Who could? Ever, dear old May, your very affectionate brother, FRED BERESFORD."

It would not require a deep knowledge of Fred's character to suggest to any one who read this letter—to any one but his mother and sister—that his unselfish reasons for asking Gower and needing twenty pounds were canting after-thoughts. May, however, had not the shadow of a doubt that one of his motives for asking this Mr. Gower was consideration for her; and that one of his motives, if not his main motive, for coveting this twenty pounds, was his longing to pay her back half of it. Yet May had been taken in hundreds of times before by this plausible Fred, who, for a young man, was singularly proficient in the art of passing base coin for gold in this canting way.

Curiously enough, Fred himself came to believe in these spurious coins after he had succeeded for some time in passing them. When he had alleged some unselfish motive for a piece of pure selfishness two or three times, he began to believe that this motive really had had something to do with inspiring the act, and he would then accept May's or his mother's acknowledgement of his magnanimity as his due.

On the other hand, no one was more keenly alive to the shortcomings of others toward himself. Like all thoroughly thankless and selfish folk, he was incessant in his complaints of the monstrous thanklessness and selfishness of others.

May received this letter of his two days after that wherein Gower's visit had been announced to her mother, and nearly a week before Fred and his friend were due at the vicarage. She could not help, as she read it, giving a sigh as she thought of her shabby bonnets and frocks, which Fred's appropriation of two quarters' allowance in succession had prevented her replacing. Not being by any means above a love of finery and a shame of shabbiness, she would have liked to look her best to this grand friend of Fred's. However, this was but a light trouble compared with that of poor Fred in debt and dunned, and without enough money even to get home. He could not help making friends, as he said, and he was so affectionate and generous that he could not help either returning their kindness at an expense which pinched and harassed him in this unhappy way. What was to be done? She hardly dare ask her father, who already had had to supplement again and again the very liberal allowance he had made to Fred, until his patience, and his purse also, were exhausted. May knew how much her

father had denied himself to make Fred the allowance he did; and how little was left to him to give up in order to satisfy these eternal demands for more. Poor Fred, she suspected, was thoughtless—a mere boy really—and had so little idea of the amount of his own expenditure and of his father's income, that he fancied his father was stinting him—instead of himself—unreasonably. But she, knowing how much the other way it was, could not bear the idea of asking her father for this twenty pounds, which he could not spare at all probably, certainly not without extreme inconvenience.

With these thoughts in her troubled mind, May decided to apply first to her mother, who was always pinching and scraping to make a privy purse of her own for Fred to draw upon. She found that good housewife in the best bedroom which she was having arranged already for Fred's distinguished friend.

"Mamma!" It is perhaps worth noting, as significant of the difference between the nature of May's regard and relation to her father and to her mother, that she called her always "Mamma," whereas she called him by the far friendlier, fuller, and more confidential title of "Father." "Mamma, have you got any money?" she asked in her direct way.

"Money!" exclaimed her mother, turning round to look her surprise.

"For Fred. He's worried so about money."

"You got your allowance last week, May, if you are so anxious to help him."

"It's all gone," May answered loyally, silent as to where it had gone. "But I thought that, perhaps, you might have enough to spare him; he wants it so. He hasn't enough, even, to bring him home."

"Do you mean that you've spent your whole quarter's allowance already?" cried her mother in incredulous surprise.

"Yes, it's all gone. But I'd pay you out of my next, if you could lend me some to send him."

"That's all nonsense, May. You know perfectly well that if I had it I should send it to him myself. But all I had I sent him last week. How you managed to spend——! You sent it to him!" she cried sharply, with a spasm of jealousy. She had almost rather that her idolised Fred should have lacked the money, than that he should have owed it to May.

"Yes," replied May simply. "But it

wasn't enough. He has been put lately to a great deal of expense which he couldn't avoid."

"I wish, May, you would be more straightforward. You as good as said you had sent him nothing," rejoined her mother petulantly. "Does he say he hasn't money to bring him home?"

"He wants more than that. I'm afraid he's a little in debt," May answered hesitatively, with a troubled face.

"Dear! He is thoughtless!" cried her mother, sitting down helplessly to think this over. After a little, she said with a sigh: "Well, you had better ask your father for it, as he has written to you;" alleging this reason, partly in pique at Fred's confiding his difficulties to May rather than herself, and partly through unwillingness to admit May's influence with her father to be greater than her own.

Having thus washed her hands of the affair, Mrs. Bereford dismissed May by rising and affecting instant absorption in her book.

May, with a heavy heart, proceeded to seek her father in the study.

"Well, my dear!" he said, looking up from his book with a welcoming smile. "Well, my dear, what is it now—the great surplice question, to button or not to button?"

But May did not return his smile.

"I had a letter from Fred to-day, father," she said, standing at one side of her father's chair, a little behind it, and resting her hand on his shoulder.

"Wanting money?" he asked quickly, with clouded brow.

"He has so many friends——" began May.

"You sent him your allowance!" her father interrupted her to say; for he knew she would not have come for money to him while she possessed a penny of her own.

"I didn't want it, father, really."

He remained silent for a little, while he put his arm round her to draw her close to his side.

"And it's not the first time you have sent it either, May. I suppose you have been wearing all sorts of shabby things, though I never noticed them; for I never get further than your face, dear," he said with a tenderness which made the speech inexpressibly deeper and dearer than a mere compliment. "I shall have to go back ten years and take you by the hand to the dressmaker's,

and trust you only with enough money to buy Con tobacco."

"You give me so much, father; so much more than I want, really; while Fred has all kinds of expenses which he cannot help."

"So that he cannot help robbing you!" he cried, with a sudden and unlooked for outburst of bitterness which he seemed to regret in the moment of uttering it; for he added, in a tone of extreme gentleness: "May, dear, I must ask you not to do this again."

"It isn't as you think, father," May pleaded earnestly. "He would not have taken it if I had wanted it. It was altogether my own doing."

"It's not only for you I am thinking, dear, but for him. It is no more kindness to him, than it would be to give a drunkard drink."

"I don't think it's extravagance, father; but he has to return the kindnesses he receives."

"He'll never ruin himself in that way," answered her father. "No, dear; it's extravagance, and extravagance of a bad kind. He has taken to gambling, May; and to give a gambler money is to feed a fever. I have said nothing to your mother about it, as it would only worry her to no purpose; but I should be glad if you would use your influence with him, dear. I have none, and he cannot treat your mother with common respect."

Here even May had nothing to say for Fred, who showed his mother more than even the usual amount of that contempt which is the acknowledgement a spoiled child makes to his worshippers.

As for the charge of gambling made against Fred, May could judge of its seriousness only from the seriousness of her father's manner. Plainly he thought it exceedingly grave.

"Did he ask you to ask me for money?" her father enquired after a short silence.

"He seemed in great need of it," she replied evasively. "He had not enough to bring him home."

"I can send him so much and no more. I would not send him more, even if I had it to spare; but I haven't, and he must know that I haven't. I can give you five pounds for him, May; and you may tell him from me that he must know why I cannot send him more—and find it hard to spare that," he said, with a significance which left May in no doubt that he had lately paid a large sum to, or for, Fred.

She removed her hand from her father's

shoulder to put her arm around his neck, while she stooped to press her cheek caressingly against his.

"Dear old father!" she said with an emotion out of proportion to its apparent cause.

"I am greatly to be pitied!" he answered in a tone and with a caress which expressed how much she was to him.

On her way to her room to answer Fred's letter, May was intercepted—casually it seemed—by her mother, who said with ill-concealed impatience and anxiety, "Well?"

"Father has given me five pounds for him."

"Was that all he wanted?"

"He wanted a little more, but father couldn't spare it."

Her mother was turning away with a troubled face when it occurred to her to ask, "Did you tell your father you had sent him your allowance?"

"Yes; he asked me."

"You were very ready to tell him," rejoined her mother.

"I only told him as I told you, when he asked me, mamma," May answered indignantly; but her mother had already turned away.

Mrs. Beresford, if not otherwise, was naturally an amiable woman; but the milk of human kindness was soured in her by jealousy, whenever that passion came into play.

May was really angry at the charge of currying favour with her father at Fred's expense, and it was some minutes before she had so far recovered her usual sweet composure, as to be able to sit down and write her letter.

"DEAREST FRED,—I am so sorry to be able to send you only five pounds; but father cannot spare more, and he bids me say that you will yourself understand why he has so little to spare. He never says anything about it; but I know that he is very poor at present from the way he denies himself everything; and he seems at times so much worried and in such low spirits. I do feel so sorry for him, and so would you, Fred dear, if you were at home and saw how troubled he seems to be sometimes. I have no doubt at all that want of money has a great deal to do with it. I know how generous you are, dear Fred, and how you cannot bear to receive kindnesses from all your many friends without returning them; but I know, too, that if you had an idea how pinched and

harassed for money father has been lately, you would think more of him than even of your friends.

"Dear old Fred, don't be cross with me and say I am always preaching, because I tell you only what you would see and feel for yourself if you were here. Being out of sight and at a distance makes such a difference; but if you were at home and saw how changed father is of late, and knew how much want of money had to do with it, I feel sure that you would deny yourself, and even your friends, to make things easier for him.

"I am afraid you will think this a dismal answer to a letter with the good news of your coming home in it; but you know how glad I am, and how I just long to see you again, dear old Fred, even if you come only to scold me! Ever, dearest Fred, your loving sister, MAY."

On reading her letter over, May was not satisfied with it at all. Nevertheless, she could think of no gentler way of expressing what her father had suggested—and her own heart approved—that she should say to her thoughtless brother.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

FEBRUARY.

THIS month derives its name from the Februa, or Feralia, sacrifices offered to the Manes of the gods at this season. Until the time of Numa Pompilius it was the last month of the year, but he placed it second, and dedicated it to Neptune, the god of water, a not inappropriate deity. According to Ovid's "Fasti,"

In ancient times purgations had the name
Of Februa; various customs prove the same.
In short, with whatsoever our hearts we hold
Are purified, was Februa termed of old;
Lustrations are from hence, from hence the name
Of this our month of February came.

The Saxons termed February "Sprout Kele," from the sprouting of cabbages during the month, and "Sol Monath" (pancake month) from the cakes offered to the sun at this time. Sol, or soul, signified food or cakes. The Zodiacal sign of the month is Pisces, or The Fishes, thus referred to by Spenser:

Then came cold February, sitting
In an old wagon, for he could not ride—
Drawn by two fishes, for the season fitting;
Which through the flood before did softly slide.

The month proved in the past a fruitful source of inspiration of the rhymes of weather prophets. A thoroughly wet Feb-

ruary was hailed as the welcome forerunner of a fine summer; so that an abundance of snow or rain was not only expected but anxiously desired during this month:

If February give much snow,
A fine summer it doth foreshow.

February fill dyke, be it black or be it white;
But if it be white it's better to like.

A similar spirit inspires the proverb which says: "When gnats dance in February the husbandman becomes a beggar." The Scotch also say that "For every song the mavis sings in February she'll lament ere spring be over."

February has seven unlucky days, namely, the sixth, seventh, tenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and twenty-eighth, spread pretty freely over the twenty-eight days allotted to it. These may, however, be warded off in a measure by wearing an amethyst, which is a prescriptive against violent passions and drunkenness.

Candlemas Day, or the Purification of the Blessed Virgin (February second) stands as a holy-day in the Church of England Calendar, and is observed in all Catholic countries with great pomp. Its observance dates from a very early period in the Christian era, and probably was one of the fast days of the Pagans. In very early days the snowdrop was called the "Purification Flower," or "The Faire Maid of February," because it is generally in bloom at this season of the year. Candlemas is said to derive its name from the circumstance that, before mass was said on that day, the Church blessed the candles for the whole year, and a procession was afterwards formed, in which the faithful carried candles. It is to be noted that, from Candlemas, the use of tapers at Vespers and Litanies, which prevailed throughout the winter, ceased, until the evening of All Hallowmass.

There was formerly an almost universal belief that if Candlemas Day were sunshiny, hard weather would follow; if cloudy, a mild season would ensue:

If Candlemas Day be fine and clear
There will be two winters in one year.

This was not a very prophetic prophecy to make, seeing that, as the year commenced with winter, so it likewise ended with the same seasonable weather. But the poem went on to say:

But if Candlemas Day bring clouds and rain,
Winter is gone, and will not come again.

A further couplet told our forefathers, as it also tells us, that,

When the wind's in the east on Candlemas Day,
There it will stick to the second of May.

Candlemas Eve is the proper time for the removal of all evergreen decorations from churches and houses; forcible reasons for which are given by Herrick, to whom we are indebted for an acquaintance with many of the old and curious customs which prevailed with our forefathers.

Down with the rosemary, and so,
Down with the bays and mistletoe;
Down with the holly, ivy, all
Wherewith ye dressed the Christmas hall;
That so the superstitious find
Not one least branch be left behind—
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected there, maids, trust to me,
So many goblins see shall ye.

In Scotland, on Candlemas Day, a custom known as Briids bed was practised. The mistress and servants of each family took a sheaf of oats and dressed it up in woman's apparel, put it in a large basket, and laid a wooden club by its side. The whole of them then cried "Briid is come! Briid is come! Briid is well come!" When they rose the next morning, they looked among the ashes on the hearth, expecting to see there the impression of Briid's club, which, if found, was considered the precursor of a good crop and a generally prosperous year. If there was no mark, it was an ill omen.

Another Scotch custom was known as "Candlemas Bull," peculiar to the Highlands. The meaning of the term is lost; but on Candlemas morning people saluted each other with "mu nase choil oust"—my Candlemas bond upon you. Whoever succeeded in first using these words, was entitled to a gift from the person saluted.

The next day, February the third, is the festal day of Saint Blaise, the patron of wool combers and wool staplers. This saint was a Bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, and suffered martyrdom in 316, for which he was canonised. Formerly at centres of the woollen industries, there were Bishop Blaise processions.

February the fifth is the day of Saint Agatha, who occupies a place in both calendars. Very little is known of Saint Agatha; and her day, for many generations, has not been observed in England, though formerly it was observed as a rigid fast day. She is the patron saint of Catalonia, and by the people of that country it is supposed that her veil, which is preserved as a most sacred relic, is a good defence against the eruptions of Mount Etna. According to a legend, the lava running down the mountain, A.D. 252, the year

after Saint Agatha's martyrdom, turned aside at her tomb. In the terrible eruption of 1669, when the burning lava was pouring down in torrents to the sea, this sacred veil was carried in procession, and presented to the fiery flood, which thereupon retired and spared the city. The fact that in 1693 the church was buried under the lava, and twenty thousand people perished, does not appear to have destroyed belief in the virtues of the miraculous veil, which would doubtless have saved the city if it could, so that the fault must not be attributed to it alone.

Collop Monday has long since ceased to have any special signification; and it takes its name from the fact that on it our forefathers were in the habit of cutting their meat into strips or collops, that it might be kept in salt until the season of Lent had passed. In some parts of England a trace of the custom is found in the eating of collops of bacon on this day. Collop Monday is the day immediately preceding Shrove Tuesday. In Yorkshire and Lancashire, the children go from door to door with the demand, "gie's a collop or a penny," evidently a corruption of the ancient petition:

To-day is Collop Monday,
Gie's a collop and let us away.

February the fourteenth is this year a double festival—Shrove Tuesday and Saint Valentine's Day. Each of these feasts has already been given.* It is, therefore, not necessary now to say much about either.

Shrove Tuesday is the first moveable feast of the year, and has for centuries been a solemn fast of the Roman Catholic and English Churches, preparatory to the religious rites of the ensuing forty days. Many superstitious practices have associated themselves with this day.

The custom of cock-fighting and cock-throwing practised on this day was most barbarous. In the latter case the unfortunate bird was tied to a stake, and sticks and stones were freely hurled at it until death put an end to its sufferings, the bird being regarded as an emblem of impiety.

In an old broadsheet preserved in the British Museum, and dating from the year 1660, Shrovetide is depicted as a puff-balanced monster, mounted upon a fat

ox bedecked with good cheer, and thus addressed Lent:

Thou say'st thou'll ease the cookes, the cookes could wish

Thee boy'l'd, or broyl'd with all thy froathy fish,
For one fish dinner takes more paines and cost,
Than three of flesh, bak'd, roast, or boy'l'd, almost.

A curious old custom prevails among the quarrymen of the Isle of Purbeck, on this day, generally observed at Corfe Castle. There is among the quarrymen a charter, bearing the date of 1551, which is rigorously obeyed, in order to keep the working of the stone quarries in the Isle of Purbeck in the hands of the freemen. To be able to take up one's freedom, it is necessary to be the legitimate son of a freeman. He must be twenty-one years of age, up to which time his wages belong to his parents. Once during each year the quarrymen meet at Corfe Castle Town Hall, and there read the charter, and on this occasion, namely, Shrove Tuesday, "Free boys" claim and take up their "freedom." Each man has to sign the roll of freemen, pay a fee of six shillings and eightpence, provide a penny loaf, made on purpose by the baker of the place, and to buy a pot of beer. The man thus sworn in becomes his own master. Should any of the freemen desire to marry during the next year he has to pay the stewards a "marriage shilling," and should he neglect to do this his wife after his death loses all interest in the quarry and cannot take an apprentice to work for her. After the above business is transacted the ceremony of "kicking the ball" is commenced. The ball is provided by the man who was last married among the freemen, and is presented in lieu of the "marriage shilling." If it should happen that no freeman has married since the previous Shrove Tuesday, an old football is used. The ball is taken from the Town Hall to a field at Corfe Castle, and there kicked about by any one who wishes. These proceedings are terminated by the ball, and a pound of pepper being taken to the lord of the manor as an acknowledgement to him in respect of the right of way to the River Ower.

A few words as to the origin of Saint Valentine's Day. The saint who gives it its name was Bishop of Rome, and was martyred in the third century for his adhesion to the doctrines of Christianity. In his "Illustrations to Shakespeare," Mr. Douce says: "It was the practice in ancient Rome, during the great part of the month of February, to celebrate the Lupercalia,

* Shrove Tuesday, "Household Words," April the tenth, 1866, and Saint Valentine's Day, "All the Year Round," February the twelfth, 1887.

which were feasts in honour of Pan and Juno, whence the latter deity was named Februa, Februalis, and Februlla. On this occasion, amidst a variety of ceremonies, the names of young women were put into a box, from which they were drawn by the men as chance directed. The pastors of the early Christian Church, by every possible means, endeavoured to eradicate the vestiges of Pagan superstitions, and chiefly by some commutations of their forms, substituted, in the present instance, the names of particular saints instead of those of women; and as the festivals of the Lupercalia had commenced about the middle of February, they appear to have chosen Saint Valentine's Day for celebrating the new feast, because it occurred nearly at the same time. This is, in part, the opinion of a learned and rational compiler of the 'Lives of the Saints,' the Rev. Alban Butler. It would seem, however, that it was utterly impossible to extirpate altogether any ceremony to which the common people had been much accustomed—a fact which it were easy to prove by tracing the origin of various other popular superstitions. And, accordingly, the outline of the ancient ceremonies was preserved, but modified by some adaptation to the Christian system. It is reasonable to suppose that the above practice of choosing mates would gradually become reciprocal in the sexes, and that all persons so chosen would be called 'Valentine's,' from the day on which the ceremony took place."

Ash Wednesday, or the "Head of the Fast," which this year falls on February the fifteenth, derives its name from the fact that on this day the priests in the Romish Church blessed the ashes which were made of the branches of the palms consecrated the previous year, and put them on the heads of the people.

Ash Wednesday marks the commencement of the great and primitive fast of forty days, instituted by Noah, as an eternal benison to future ages of the providence of God in the preservation of the world. After our Saviour's resurrection this institution was very happily blended with the more glorious event, by His disciples. For centuries it was regarded as so solemn a season that theatres were—until quite recently—closed for the day; and the House of Commons shortened its sittings when in session.

It is said that Pope Felix the Third, in 487, first added the four days preceding

the old Lent Sunday to raise the number of fasting days to forty; and that Pope Gregory, in 590, introduced the sprinkling of ashes on the first of these four additional days, hence the term "dies cinerum," or Ash Wednesday. The custom of sprinkling the ashes was abolished at the Reformation, as being a mere shadow or vain show.

To whatever part of the world we turn our attention—that is to say, the civilised world—we find traces of customs peculiar to this solemn season, and in all cases accompanied with more or less fasting. From the days of Noah, right down to the present day, forty days, at one season or another, have been set apart for the purpose of solemn prayer and supplication. In England, the customs connected with Lent have been many and varied, especially before the Reformation. Both Catholics and Protestants—more especially the former—have regarded it as a period for fasting and special religious services; indeed, in this respect, it is very doubtful if ever Lent was more seriously observed than in our own time. In mediæval times they were, no doubt, stricter in the matter of fish and the rejection of flesh; but to the majority, as to the wife of Bath, the penitential season must have called up quite other thoughts than those of self-mortification.

During the season of Lent an officer, denominated the King's Cock Crower, formerly crowed the hour every night within the precincts of the Royal residence, instead of, as on other occasions, proclaiming it in the ordinary manner. The duties were abolished on the accession of George the First to the throne; but not the office and salary, which were continued until the time of George the Fourth.

Other Lent customs are dealt with under various heads; but the names of the various Sundays during the season may be here enumerated as:

Tid, mid, and misera,
Carling, Palm, Pass Egg day.

The meanings of the first three days are hopelessly lost, though probably connected with obsolete services for the days. The others are dealt with under separate heads.

February the twenty-fourth is Saint Matthias's Day, a festival of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches. It is also the first ember day of the year. The twenty-second and twenty-eighth are likewise Ember days.

This year being Leap Year, February has

twenty-nine days. In the time of Julius Cæsar, the Solar year was fixed at three hundred and sixty-five days, six hours, which was supposed to comprise the period from one vernal equinox to another. The six hours were reckoned once every four years, when an extra day was added to the year. The extra day was placed a day before the twenty-fourth of February—the sixth of the calends—which was reckoned twice; hence the term, "bissextile," or twice sixth. By this arrangement the year is three minutes longer than the astronomical year. This, however, is corrected by a very simple plan: All years whose index number is divisible by four, are Leap Years, unless (a) their index number is divisible by one hundred century years. In this case they are not Leap Years, unless (b) their index number is divisible by four hundred. Thus, 1900 and 2100 are not Leap Years, while 2000 and 2400 are. In the countries where the Greek Church holds sway, the Julian Calendar is in force, and every fourth year is regarded as a Leap Year. Russia and Greece will count 1900 as a Leap Year; and after February, 1900, the difference of twelve days now existing between the Julian and Gregorian Calendars will be increased to thirteen days.

A PARISIAN BOARDING HOUSE.

OUR pension was, of course, no mere ordinary pension—what woman ever yet acknowledged that anything that was hers was ordinary?—and very proud we all were of, what we considered, its unique position.

Parisian boarding-houses are, as a rule, hot-beds of laziness and gossip; but, from our establishment, frivolous conversation was banished, and a serious occupation in life was a necessity for obtaining a footing amongst us. There was one question that our Lady Principal never failed to address to new comers: "To what do you intend to devote your time whilst in Paris?" and woe be to the unhappy individual who had the courage to acknowledge that her bent was pleasure. A rod of iron seemed, by some mysterious power, to glide down the backbone of our chief; the smile vanished from her lips; the dulcet tones from her voice, as she explained that her establishment was for the bees, not the butterflies, of life. "There are in Paris," she would remark, with a

condescending wave of the hand, "pensions where pleasure-seekers will no doubt be welcome; but it is my privilege, the object to which I devote my life, to make a 'home'"—this word she always gave in English, and by a subtle intonation, she contrived to show how well she knew all that it implied—"for ladies having serious occupations necessitating their presence in the French capital."

At the end of this discourse, the frivolous worldling was gently led to the door.

Thus we, the fortunate twenty, who were admitted into Madame's Home, stood dignified—or branded, as you will—by the title of "women with occupations."

Perhaps it was the knowledge of this that gave to most of us that air of depression which was one of our distinguishing characteristics. I could, I remember, scarcely repress a shudder, when I first glanced down the long, narrow, dining-table; there was such an utter absence of simple, wholesome, human joy in the faces of the women who were sitting around it. Young, old, middle-aged, all were there; all women of means—you don't find the comforts of a home in Paris for a trifle—most of them women of refinement and culture; but how strangely desolate and sad they seemed! How rarely one heard a laugh, or a light-hearted jest within those walls! What can induce such women to leave their own land? A man may stand the test of isolation; but a woman, separated from her kith and kin, seems to lose half the charm of womanhood.

We lived in one of those great white houses which have sprung up like mushrooms around the Arc de Triomphe, the sort of house an advertisement describes as replete with every modern convenience. And so it was: we had bath-rooms and lifts; the grand saloon was a perfect model of artistic beauty; whilst our little private dens, in which we were supposed to work during the day, were quite charming. The dinners, too, were luxurious, and every effort was made to render easy the lives of the ladies with occupations.

From eight a.m. to seven p.m. if we were indoors, it was by courtesy taken for granted that we were hard at work: after that we might relax from our pursuits without exciting remark. Thus the evening was our only time for becoming acquainted with our fellow-workers.

From the first day I was in the home the people that most excited my interest were an American lady and her son and

daughter. An ill-sorted, incongruous party one might have been tempted to say, if their tenderness for each other had been less apparent. As it was, no matter which was speaking—mother, son, or daughter—he or she seemed instinctively to glance at the two others for sympathy.

The mother, Mrs. Meredith—a dainty little lady of about fifty—must, in her youth, have been singularly lovely; even when I knew her, I considered her one of the most attractive women I had ever met. She was always dressed to perfection, and in the latest fashion: her gloves and shoes were marvels of beauty, and I have seen her positively shudder as she glanced at the careless attire of her daughter. We all—from the eldest to the youngest—were her devoted slaves; but she accepted our homage as an absolute matter of course. Evidently from her cradle she had been accustomed to the incense of adorers.

The most humble of her worshippers was her own son, a great, burly professor, with kindly eyes, an honest face, and a shy, awkward manner; he always seemed to be too intent upon knowing what was passing under the earth to trouble himself about those who lived on its surface—always excepting his mother and sister, whose slightest movement he watched with wondering admiration. It was one of the prettiest sights in the world to see his rugged face soften, and the dull, abstract expression of his eyes melt with tenderness, when either of these ladies entered the room—the whole man seemed to be transformed. Evidently he had come abroad simply to act as his mother's escort—it was in this capacity he had been admitted into our feminine establishment—and in sooth his office was no sinecure. From early morning to late at night he must dance attendance from *Le Bon Marché* to the *Louvre*; the *Bois* to the *Opera*; for, in spite of her fifty years, Mrs. Meredith's taste for gaiety was insatiable.

When the weather was fine, her son accompanied her without a murmur; but when winter set in, and east winds were blowing, and snow was falling, both he and his sister struggled hard to keep the volatile little lady within doors. Though she was fragile as a flower, this was no easy task; and it was often difficult to repress a smile at the novel spectacle of a mother almost reduced to tears, because her hard-hearted children would not let her go to some scene of dissipation. They were very

sweet and gentle with her; and, unless the danger was really great, Mrs. Meredith generally, in the end, carried her point. But I have seen her daughter fix her great mournful eyes upon her with a look of unutterable perplexity, as if her mother were some wonderful bird or flower, which she loved and tended, but strove vainly to understand.

Dr. Meredith's love for his mother seemed only to be surpassed by his devotion to his sister, Mrs. Shilleto. When he spoke to her there was always a touch of reverential awe, mingled with the tenderness of his manner. Evidently she was, for him, a being apart, far removed from all petty human frailties and cares. I think we all, though we knew not why, in a more or less degree, shared Dr. Meredith's feeling. Although I could chatter with an easy mind the veriest nonsense—as my pursuit was art, my frivolity was pardoned—to Mrs. Meredith, my words died on my lips, and I stammered like a school-girl if her daughter drew near. It was not that Mrs. Shilleto was hard or stern, far from it; the gentle courtesy of her manner was exquisite; and no one could look into her face and doubt the sweetness of her nature. Still, there must have been an indefinable something in her that froze up the font of human intercourse; for, as I soon observed, I was not the only one who suffered when she was near. But if we all instinctively shrank away when she approached, it was not with repugnance, but rather with awe, as if we knew we were in the presence of one upon whom some great affliction had fallen.

The only thing she seemed to care for was music; and whilst her mother was wandering off in search of amusement, she would pass whole days at the piano. She was a tall, slight woman, about five-and-twenty, with delicate features, and a clear white skin which looked as if, in some far-back age, it had been tinged with rose. Her hair, which must have been of that light fluffy, golden sort which stands around a face like a halo, was, when I knew her, perfectly white, not a touch of colour in it, not even a streak of grey. Her eyes, large and beautifully-formed though they were, had the dull, absent look you find in the eyes of the blind. Even when she was speaking their expression never varied; it was as if the nerves that should unite them with the brain had been snapped asunder. There was something painfully weird in this

youthful, elegant form and lovely face, contrasting with snow-white hair, and dull, dead eyes. The remembrance of it haunted me day and night; so that it was with almost a sense of relief I heard that the doctors had ordered her to the South.

The most casual observer could not doubt but that her life had been a tragic one; but it was years before I knew what had blanched her hair and driven life and hope from her face.

Whilst in Switzerland, on her honeymoon, she and her husband one day set out together for a walk. Seven hours later, Mrs. Shilleto rushed into the hotel alone, wild, nay mad, with grief and terror. Her husband was found the next day at the bottom of a deep ravine, dead, and mangled almost beyond recognition. What had really happened was never known, for Mrs. Shilleto was raving mad for months; and even when, six years later she was calm and sane, none dared to question her concerning that fearful day.

The Russian Countess Olga, with her strange, wild animal nature, interested me scarcely less keenly than Mrs. Shilleto. Her mother, the widow of some distinguished general, finding little time in the midst of Court gaieties to think of a daughter whom the doctors had pronounced too delicate to live in St. Petersburg, had sent her down to a large estate she owned on the Polish border, and then, for some years, had forgotten her existence. Doubtless, at the same time, she sent teachers and governors to fit the little Countess to play her part later in the great world; but these must either have failed in their duty or found their task an impossible one, for, when the Countess Olga was summoned home that her education might receive its finishing touches, and that she might be presented to the world, and married to the man her mother had selected, she spread woe and dismay in the family circle. She had been brought up surrounded by semi-barbarians, peasants, and serfs, and seemed to have found in her own nature more affinity with them than with the species of man with whom she was brought into contact in her mother's house.

The gentle, docile invalid her family had been prepared to welcome had developed into a fierce, aggressive reformer, with a keen sense of her own wrongs and of the wrongs of the people amongst whom she had lived, and with a firm determination to avenge them.

Her mother and brothers, shocked and

startled by her wild words and ways, sent her to a fashionable educational establishment, where they hoped that, surrounded by companions of her own age and position, she would acquire at least the outward forms of civilisation. But the well-born Western girls shrank with equal repugnance from Olga's caresses as from her violence, and, disliking her from the first, they employed all the arts of their smaller, meaner natures to render her life unbearable.

After one or two scenes of unparalleled violence, the Principal was forced, for the sake of peace, to resign the honour of having a Russian Countess under her care, and poor Olga was sent away.

The experiment was repeated again and again, always with the same result; until the girl was about twenty, when, accompanied by a sort of keeper, she joined our establishment. By this time she had become comparatively tamed; she had developed a decided talent for music, and great hopes were entertained as to the soothing effects this might have upon her. I think we were all rather afraid of her, and certainly her appearance was not calculated to arouse any gentler sentiment. Five feet ten, at least, in height, she had the figure and walk which one is more prepared to find in a guardsman than a young lady. She had a well-formed nose, low, straight brow, and a firm jaw, which, much too square and heavy for feminine beauty, was indicative of an iron will. Her eyes were small and deeply set; her complexion perfectly colourless, nay, sometimes almost blue from intensity of its pallor: in a word, she, the descendant of one of the most ancient families in Europe, would have been a god-send to any artist seeking a model of the Nihilist type. Less carefully watched, she would have joined one of those secret societies, for which she never disguised her sympathy. Nor would she have been a drone in their hive; unless her face belied her, she would have proved an invaluable instrument in the hands of an unscrupulous, or reckless leader.

Having made one or two slight attempts to gain the good-will of a pretty English girl, who had not a thought, or an idea in her head, and having met with no response, the Countess Olga stood completely aloof in our little social gatherings. She would sit for the hour together knitting her brows, and frowning down upon us, in a way that was rather trying to the nerves of our

weaker sisters; but, beyond that, and an occasional dangerous glance, she did no harm. As I watched her moving about amongst us, with our little gilded chairs and tables, and bits of useless fancy-work, she seemed to me as a being from another sphere, perhaps not a higher, but one at least where airs and graces are unknown, and where men and women speak and act as their natures prompt. Surely it is from such as she that Zola and his school take their type of womanhood. "*Bête fauve*," I once heard a dainty Parisian call her, and I was struck by the fitness of the title. Yes, she had all the fierce passion of the animal race, its wild, uncontrollable impulse, its instinctive loves and hates; but she had, too, a boundless fund of self-sacrificing devotion, if ever she met with one worthy to call it into play. I always think of her as one of those great lions that, in narrow cages, wear out their lives with restless pacing. It seems a hard fate that condemns her, with her strong freedom-loving nature, to the conventional fetters of her class.

Miss Maria Blake was another of the inmates who attracted no small amount of attention in our little "*réunions*." She was an American, who had come to Paris to study art. Some one having once told her that she resembled Rosa Bonheur, it became, from that moment, one of the great objects of her life to accentuate the resemblance: straightway her hair was cut short, the semi-masculine attire of her model was adopted, and all the little mannerisms and eccentricities of the great animal painter were faithfully reproduced. Still, in spite of all her affectation and folly, Maria Blake was a large-hearted generous woman, always ready, with kindly word and helping hand, to come to the aid of those in need; and when her great picture was hung on the walls of the Salon, we all rejoiced as heartily as if her triumph were our own.

Her fellow-countrywoman, Frederica, or Donna Quixote as we named her, was scarcely less popular; rich, handsome, twenty-three years old, with perfect health, and a never-failing flow of good spirits, if ever a mortal were content, surely it should have been she. But, far from this being the case, her whole life was spent in a vain endeavour to rectify the workings of fortune, at least in so far as they affected her sex. She had come to Paris for the purpose of studying the position of women with regard to the criminal

code: she had tried London first, but had deserted that city in disgust at, what she styled, "the slavery-loving nature of the women." What she was trying to bring about I could never quite discover, though she would talk for the hour together of her mission, which, in some mysterious way, was to lead to the regeneration of feminine humanity. She certainly worked harder than any mill-hand in the kingdom.

Our third American belonged to a very different class. She hailed from the Far West, where her father had just struck oil, or some other commodity equally dollar-producing. Though ignorant of the simplest elements of learning, she was well versed in the science of life. When she was seven years old her mother died, and from that moment she seemed to have taken full command of her father's household, store, children, and all; and in the course of her career as general manager, she had accumulated a vast fund of wise maxims on men and manners, which she gave forth at all times and seasons. She looked about thirty when she came to Paris, but was probably younger, though there were no traces of youth or good looks in her honest, resolute face. "I kalkilate t'will take me two years," she said to me one day, "to learn all ye know, and then I'll make me way back to th' old man and t'bairns, and we'll tak our place wi' th' best o' 'em." And, if industry and determination go for anything, she must have achieved her object before this; for she worked from early morning to late at night, whilst professors and teachers vied with "*coiffeurs*" and "*modistes*," in fitting the American heiress to play her part in fashionable society.

She looked very weary sometimes, but she struggled on. "When I've gotten edication," she used to say, "I can help t'bairns. I should like t'bairns to start fair." "T'bairns" were her brothers and sisters.

Then there was a beautiful girl who had been sent out of the way, lest she should interfere with the matrimonial prospects of her plain-looking elder sister.

Another, a silly, golden-haired beauty, who was supposed to be studying French literature, whilst the divorce court was deciding the fate of her equally silly, golden-haired mother.

Three languid, colourless girls, who were waiting for the return of their parents from India.

These, and many another, pass through my mind as I think of that tall, bare house,

with its long, monotonous row of great staring windows, under the shade of the *Arc de Triomphe*.

But two figures stand out more clearly than the rest: the Fauns we used to call them. They were only children—a boy of fourteen, and a girl a year younger; but beautiful and bright, beaming with life and happiness. It was a pleasure to look at them; they were such perfect emblems of the sweetness of youth. They were never cross or troublesome, as other children are; the smile never left their lips, a cloud was never seen on their brows. We were all very proud of such model children, for they made no noise and were never in the way; but an old philosopher, who had passed his life studying his kind, chanced one evening to dine in the house. I saw him looking at the boy with evident interest. I asked him why. Instead of replying to my question he inquired if I had read "*Transformation*." The book happened to be fresh in my mind, as I had come across it only a few days before. I said so.

"Then don't you see the likeness?" he asked, pointing to the boy. "He is *Donatello*, the Faun, minus, of course, the ears."

The old man was right. As a revelation it darted through my mind that I had never seen those children shed a tear or show one touch of human feeling. Smiling as sweetly on the latest comer as on their own father, natural affection, moral responsibility was, as their after-life proved, for them a dead letter: they were Fauna.

THE HERBALIST.

WHO knows much about the herbalist, except as an irregular practitioner of the art of healing—irregular, that is, inasmuch as he holds no degree or diploma, and yet often a skilful man in his way, who has acquired the trust and confidence of the country-side, and whose fame has travelled far and wide in a noiseless, subterranean fashion? There is a deep-seated, hereditary faith among simple country folk, which turns towards the herb-doctor as the presumed repository of the healing gifts of Nature—especially if the herb-doctor be some wise man who has inherited the lore of his forefathers; or, if the doctor be an old woman, the faith is perhaps still the greater, as holding to some possible connection with more potent charms.

In towns, too, and in great cities, even in the Metropolis itself, the herb-doctor lives and thrives; but here he shades off insensibly into the advertising owner of pills and nostrums, although there is no lack of veritable herbalists dealing in all kinds of medicinal herbs, and giving such advice as they may without incurring the penalties of the Medical Act.

A certain charm still clings to the ancient lore of herbs and simples—a lore which retains a leaven of ancient rites and fond beliefs, with pleasing superstitions that still linger in the shady places of the world. "Physic without Astrology being a lamp without oil," according to an ancient herbalist, it may be expected that those who are wise in herb-lore should also know something about ruling the stars.

With these feelings, it was a real delight to come across a quite modern pamphlet, "*The Family Domestic Herbalist*," published in the present decade, where the following information is given, in all good faith, respecting the useful herb *Wormwood*. "It cleanseth the body of choler (who dare say *Mars* doth no good!)." The allusion here is, of course, to the theory that the various herbs of the earth are all governed by the planets of the celestial world. Nor does it detract much from the charm of the thing to find that the passage is taken straight from the "*English Physician Enlarged*," of *Nicholas Culpeper*, published in 1653. The original author, indeed, has a great deal more to say about this particular herb—whole pages of *rhodomontade*, as it seems to us, about *Mars* and *Saturn*, with *Venus* and the rest; but, then, we are not "illuminati," and there is an esoteric meaning, if we may believe our author, in all this skimble-skamble: "He that reads this and understandeth what he reads, he hath a jewel more worth than a diamond. There lies a key in these words. . . . I have delivered it so plainly as I durst . . . this shall live when I am dead . . . wisdom is justified of her children—and so much for *Wormwood*."

There is a morsel of fulfilled prophecy here that attracts attention—of prophecy like *Shakespeare's*. "Not marble nor the gilded monuments of princes shall outlive these powerful rhymes." And although there are few to peruse the treatises of *Culpeper* at the present day, yet they still live in the popular handbooks of the herbalists, which, for the most part, like the one just alluded to, are only *Culpeper*

abridged. In our "Family Herbalist" all the astrological allusions are cut out, except in the above article on Wormwood. To one acquainted with the original text this exception seems significant. Might it be read as an intimation that the author or adapter of the new handbook believed himself to be the possessor of the jewel worth more than a diamond—the key to the dark sayings of the astrologer? Anyhow, it would be worth a little trouble to find out some one who had still a genuine belief in planetary influence.

The result of the search is, perhaps, a little disappointing. There is a certain picturesque element indeed about the herbalist's shop, placed in the narrowest part of what was once a main coaching road out of London. The low, steep-roofed houses, the multitude of taverns, the narrow muddy road, the high causeway—not high enough to save the foot passengers from being splashed by the wheels of the High-flyer coach, or of the dashing, chaise-and-four—all these show but a gradual change and decay. In a corner which might easily be passed without notice, is the narrow bow-window of a shop where packets of herbs are displayed, with labels or bills of simple remedies, lozenges for winter coughs, balsams, salves, and ointments for all the ills that flesh is heir to. Everything about the place is neat and tidy: the brass plate on the door shines with peculiar lustre; a baize-covered inner door noiselessly swings back, and admits to a neat old-fashioned room, neither shop, nor office, nor study, and yet having a look of any of these. Here is a desk, a chair, an old bureau covered with books and pamphlets, a few cases filled with the various articles that are advertised in the windows, the herb-chest, neatly filled with packets of all kinds of herbs.

In the sunshine that filters through the herbs and balsams in the window, sits the herbalist reading the "Daily Telegraph," an elderly man with a rosy clear complexion, which is itself a reasonably good testimonial to the wares he deals in. But then he is altogether too reasonable and unenthusiastic to represent the typical herbalist. Certainly, he speaks of the allopathists with mild contempt, and has no good word for the Colleges, whether of Surgeons or Physicians, and in this last respect he resembles his famous predecessor, Calpeper, who, no matter what topic he was discussing, could never refrain from a fling at the "monopolizing upstart London Colledges." But he is not one to roam about the fields

gathering herbs and flowers, observing the planetary hour, and the planet that rules the particular plant. No, when he renews his stock of herbs, he takes the train to Farringdon Street, and buys them off the wholesale dealer—for there are wholesale herbalists who have herb gardeners and collectors in their pay, and who dry and preserve the herbs, and sell them made up in neat packets to all the herbalists and herb-doctors in the country. And about Farringdon Street these dealers are chiefly to be found, along with the great advertising vendors of patent medicines and specifics.

This neighbourhood was always noted for astrologers and herb-doctors; the cunning men of Cow Lane, mentioned by Ben Jonson; those who cast nativities and predicted the future in addition to prescribing pills and potions for such as sought them out and paid them well for their mystic labours. But with such charlatans our herbalist has no connection by descent or otherwise—his astronomical views are those of the day; and, as for the allusion to Mars in the "Family Herbalist," well, the work is no doubt a reprint of a popular manual which had its origin a couple of centuries ago, and in which the God of War was an accidental survivor.

And yet, notwithstanding such disclaimers, it is pretty clear that the herbalist of to-day is connected by well-defined links with the astrological, fantastical enthusiast of other days.

It is quite possible that the College of Physicians, with all its prestige and influence, may have something to learn from the humble herbalist. Certainly some progress has been made since the solemn practitioners of old—with their powdered wigs and gold-headed canes—prescribed powdered mummy and the fat of those who had suffered on the gallows, and drew all their notions from old-world treatises of Galen or Hippocrates. The Pharmacopœia has been enlarged indeed by the discovery of new regions with their vegetable products. We owe quinine to the Jesuits, and sundry other useful remedies to botanists and explorers—but what do we owe to the physicians themselves? And the wisest physician is often compelled to own the superior efficacy of old women's remedies in simple cases over his own more elaborate prescriptions. And apart from those personal remedies with which our physicians—as blindly groping, perhaps, as their predecessors—

attack the diseases of the day, is there no virtue in our old English herbs? And were these old quacks who loved and studied them—who “made juleps, and syrups, and decoctions, ointments, plaisters, and pultisses, with troches, loches, pills, and powders,” all from the produce of their old-fashioned herb gardens—were all their remedies but foolishness and imposture?

That a good deal of the old popular medical art still survives—although in an imperfect and fragmentary state—is evidenced by the constant demand for the packets of herbs which are the chief stock-in-trade of our herbalist.

There is a printed list of these which contains the names of many common and a few rare English herbs, the appearance and properties of which were familiar to our great grandmothers, but which few but the professional herb-gatherer would now recognise. There are Agrimony, Balm, and Burdock—those pleasant English names! far sweeter on the tongue than those horrible Latin combinations—Camomile and Celandine; Clivers—the fame of which for eruptions on the face is still high, and which Culpeper styles “Cleavers or Goose Grass,” and of which he says, “it is familiarly taken in broth, to keep them lean and lank that are apt to grow fat.”

Then we have Comfrey and Coltsfoot, with Cranesbill and Dandelion, the curative properties of which are known in every language and clime. Then there is Featherfew, a herb under the rule of the planet Venus, and of quite marvellous capacities in various emergencies; nor is Darnel wanting, nor rank Fumitory, with Ground Ivy, and Carduus Benedictus or Holy Thistle. Horehound, still in high credit for throat and lungs; Marsh Mallow and Meadowsweet, with Mugwort, Nettles, and Pellitory. Pennyroyal is another well-known herb; and Rosemary, better known by reputation than to actual experience. Then there is Rue again—the chosen partner of the last—a famous popular antiseptic; and there is Sage, which suggests roast goose, but which has such a number of “vertues and uses” that happy must be he who eats plenty of stuffing. With these are Scabious and Southernwood, and herb Johannis. “This is called Saint Johannes Worte”; to quote an old black-letter treatise, “the vertue of it is thus, yf it be put in a manne's house, there shall come no wycked spirit therein.”

The list comes to an end with Tansey, Vervain, Wormwood, Woodsage, and Yar-

row. The list altogether comprises some sixty species of English Medicinal Herbs, all of which form part of the herbalist's regular stock-in-trade, and for which there is a constant and regular demand which shows how deeply rooted in popular affection are these simple remedies.

Other herbs there are more potent and dangerous, which the herbalist must keep apart for special needs, and can only retail with due precautions. These are Foxglove, and the Deadly Nightshade, and the Hemlock, the juice of which is as fatal now as in the days of Socrates, with Aconite of poisonous fame, and others with noxious properties, and unfitted for general circulation.

In contrast with the modest pretensions of the herbalist of the present day, we may pay an imaginary visit to one of the fraternity who flourished more than a couple of centuries ago, and whose works, as we have seen, are still in credit among the craft—namely, “one Nicholas Culpeper, gent., Student in Astrology and Physick, in Spittlefields, next door to the Red Lyon.” No venerable-bearded sage is he, but young, dark, and handsome, with fiercely-curved moustache, long love-locks, and large soft, dark, and magnetic eyes. A fine embroidered collar sets off his dark curling ringlets, and his black silk doublet and grand silk cloak hung upon him in jaunty becoming folds. If an inkhorn hangs at his girdle instead of a scabbard, and if he fingers the pages of a treatise instead of the hilt of a rapier, it is because such is his humour, and the fashion of the time. It is the Commonwealth, mark you, and royster-ing blades are out of fashion.

But Master Nicholas is fully instructed in all the lore of the astrologers and thau-maturgists: to cast your nativity, or divine your horoscope, is but child's play to him. He is concerned, too, about the fate of nations. For him, young as he is, the universe holds few secrets, neither the elementary world nor the celestial world, and he has an eye for the secret essences, not only of the animal, but also the vegetable kingdom. For there are ghosts of plants, he will tell you, as well as of once living souls.

“For, indeed, though a plant be burnt to ashes, yet, by a secret and wonderful power of the Almighty, whereby he teaches wisdom to the sons of wisdom, it retains still the same form it had before, though not visible to the eye of the vulgar.”

And if the planets ruled, in their inex-

orable sway, the destinies of every living thing, they also presided over every organ of the human frame, and over every herb of the field, however humble; and, having once settled under what planetary influence such a herb might grow, its virtues for that part of the human system which was ruled by the same planet, might surely be inferred. But for the rest, he had a wonderful knowledge of the various native herbs, and an excellent power of description.

Master Culpeper died in the very prime of life; but he left behind him his universal remedy, the *Aurum Potabile*, which cures all diseases, inasmuch as it exhilarates the heart and vital spirits; and which, with the sale of his treatises, afforded material consolation to his widow, Alice. The widow, however, in editing his writings, complained that she had been forestalled by unauthorized editions of his latest works, which were altogether spurious and worthless, adducing among other proofs of the same, the following morsel of internal evidence: "Neither can it be thought that in such a solemn valediction, he could possibly forget his wonted respects to the College of Doctours." In the genuine treatise he by no means forgets to show his contempt and dislike for the "upstart Colledge," and leaves the enjoyment of these feelings as a legacy to his successors—a bequest of which the fraternity of herbalists seem to have taken full advantage, even to the present day.

TOLTECS AND AZTECS.

MAN is, and always has been, a strange mixture. There is a deal in him of the tiger, or the monkey, or both. He has, for instance, always been great at killing. The old Aztecs did it wholesale as a religious ceremony, never slaying any one in battle if they could help it, but carrying off their prisoners by the hundreds to be sacrificed to the gods. The modern Europeans do it equally wholesale, when the marling of French against German becomes unbearable, or when it suits the Czar's pleasure to take away another instalment from the "Sick Man's" property. If a man dies, it does not very much matter whether he is caught and fastened by the leg on the Aztec "gladiatorial stone"—you can see one of them in the new museum at Mexico—and armed only with a wooden sword, set to fight champions who

had Obsidian blades as sharp as lancets, or whether he is struck down with a rifle bullet and left to die amid the snow of the Balkans, or trampled into clay during one of the desperate *mêlées* at Plevna, or torn to pieces with Krupp's shells at Gravelotte.

No one defends human sacrifices, while a great many defend aggressive war; that is one difference. Another is that the Aztecs believed the most glorious of all deaths, and that which ensured the quickest passage to the realms of bliss, was to be offered up to one of the gods, whereas few, except Mahomedans, have believed anything equivalent about those slain in battle.

But, besides killing, man has almost everywhere gone in for building. From Baalbec and Palmyra to Easter Island, from Java and Cambodia to the "mound cities" of Ohio, the earth is full of his works. Sometimes, as in the case of the "mound cities," and the avenues of rude granite pillars at Karnac, in Brittany, the builders cannot even be guessed at. Sometimes, as in the case of the Mexican pyramids, and temples, and palaces, we know their name, but are wholly in the dark as to their parentage. It was the Toltecs, humane, civilised predecessors of the Aztecs, who, the latest archaeologists assure us, filled the Mexican upland valley, and Yucatan, and other parts of Central America, with vast structures, often covered with most elaborate carving.

But who were the Toltecs? And why are some parts of Mexico and the neighbouring countries full of their work, while in others there is no trace of them? A suggestion towards answering this last query may be the absence or presence of suitable stone. That to a great extent determines the architecture of a country.

In England, along the oolite, every farm-house is a miniature Tudor mansion, while on the clay lands, houses of the same class, being brick, are as ugly and commonplace as the others are picturesque.

So through a great part of China—the land is as stoneless as a Russian steppe—houses, pagodas, all are of wood, and were the "yellow race" to migrate or die out, in a short time almost all traces of Chinese culture would have passed away.

To answer the first question, you naturally compare the building and the carving with that of other nations. And the resemblances are so many and yet so slight, that you soon give up in despair.

The pottery of the Toltecs, for instance, has a general likeness to that of the old Peruvians; but then many of the vases have a Greek look—some resembling those dug by Dr. Schliemann, in the lower strata of that succession of cities, one of which was Troy; some as graceful as the most purely "classical" forms. Then, again, they built pyramids, as did the old Egyptians. But a Toltec pyramid is almost always truncated, the top being often the site of a temple, placed there to be seen afar off, or it may be to avoid the floods to which, in prehistoric times, the Mexican valley may have been subject.

Have they any connection with the Ohio "mounds"? Seemingly none, for, while the Toltec structures are truncated stone pyramids, the mounds are of earth, roughly shaped like colossal beavers, bisons, and other creatures.

Lastly, there is the sculpture. This is sometimes as fresh as if done yesterday; for, in those buildings which the Spaniards occupied, they were careful to plaster over the "idolrous" work, that their most Christian eyes might not be offended thereat. So that explorers like M. Charnay, who, following up Stephens, Waldeck, Maudsley, and others, has been working this still only half-touched field have only to carefully pick out the covering and take a "squeeze" of what lies below it.

Well, some of this carving—that on the "nunnery" at Chichen-itza, columns and capitals in the "castillo" of the same place, cornices and façades there and in other places—is singularly Romanesque in character. Sometimes there is the lozenge-diaper work and the dog-tooth moulding which we call "Norman"; sometimes the cable work—like interlacing serpents—which is seen alike on Irish crosses and Norse monuments.

Some, again, have round their sides thoroughly cross-legged figures with turbans, Hindoo in character; while several of the statues found at Tlascala are, in head-dress and type of face, strangely like the earliest Egyptian work!

Again, M. Charnay sets side by side the Temple of the Sun at Palenque and a Japanese temple, showing that in shape of roof and manner in which it is supported, the two are identical. A good deal of the decorations in the Palenque niches and corridors is as like the carved work at Nikko as it is possible for stone work to be like wood.

Another point is that all the lines are

horizontal, as those of a Greek temple: no idea of the arch; nothing to "lift up the thoughts," as they say the vertical lines of the Gothic do.

Lastly, a great deal of the carving is like what an architecturally-minded child invents as filling up for its cathedral fronts, etc. These foliated crosses, with figures covered with bracelets and necklaces and wearing feather helmets standing near them, certainly belong to the baby style of ornamentation. The explanation is that, for figures of the gods and sacred inscriptions, and such like, there was a conventional method from which the artist was not allowed to depart. Anyhow, in every case, much better and wholly different work lies close by.

One thing strikes everybody: these Toltecs—if such they were—had remarkably receding foreheads. One notes that on the medallions, which are as great a feature of the room cornices at Palenque as they are of those in a French Renaissance château, sometimes the hair is dressed much the same as in the French; but the forehead always slopes back unnaturally—most of all in the figures of the gods, who, with their Roman noses and full, heavy jaws, are not unlike a certain type of Mediæval ecclesiastic. One thinks of the Flat-head Indians, and wonders if similarity of custom shows identity of race.

According to the old Spanish writers, this forehead-flattening was confined to priests and nobles, and they have pretty well died out, though we must not forget that still to be a true-blood Indian is an honour. He ranks not only above Mestizos, Mulattos, and other hybrids, but above the descendants of the Spaniards.

These Toltecs, then—we are as much at sea about them as ever. Were they a part of that race which carved the huge images on Easter Island, and sculptured the earliest monuments in Hindostan, and carried its arts into Egypt, where arts, as well as workmen, underwent a notable change? Was there ever such a race? Who knows?

Tradition says that the Toltecs came in from the north-west, which makes it seem as if some of them came from farther Asia, by way of Polynesia.

Their civilisers may have done so; for, as the Peruvians had their Manco Capac, so they had their God of Wisdom, virgin-born Quetzalcoatl, who taught the arts of life, and then disappeared, vowing he should come again. The expectation of

his coming greatly helped Cortez. It gave him allies among Tlascalans, and others of Toltec race, whom the invading Aztecs had crushed down. For them it was the most natural thing in the world that the gods should come among them in the likeness of men. They came in huge living canoes, which, with white wings, were able to move of themselves. They had the lightning and the thunder in their grasp. What most undeceived them was probably the vulgarity of these very earthly divinities; for—as in India nowadays—your native is very clever in finding out a gentleman.

One thing is clear, the Spaniards found a teeming population. Of Yucatan, Montejo, writing in 1529 to the King of Spain, says: "This region is covered with cities, large, beautiful, and new (*muy frescas*).^{*} The terror of the Spaniards had preceded them. Cruelties like that of Alvarado, whom Cortez had left as Lieutenant when he went down to the coast to fight Narvaez, had done their work. This monster in human form yielded to the prayer of the Mexicans that they might be allowed to hold their great May-Day Festival with songs, and dances, and display of jewels and feather-work mantles. "Yes," said the Spaniard, "if you come unarmed, and offer no human victims. And we will come and look on." The Mexicans came accordingly, with no weapons, but with their bravery of gold collars and bracelets, and ankle-rings. The Spanish soldiers came armed; but, as they were always armed, this excited no suspicion. But as soon as the sacred dances began, Alvarado and his followers rushed in and began slaying and stripping the slain. A few scaled the walls; a few lying on the temple floors, shamming death, and so escaped; but most of them, as they rushed to the gates, were driven back by those who held them to those who were slaying within. And so the "May Feast of the War God" was accomplished "without human victims," indeed, but with such outpouring of blood that a fiend might revel in the exchange. "Like water in a heavy shower," a contemporary describes the bloodshed by his countrymen. More than six hundred of the noblest Mexicans—for it was they who alone had a right to join in the ceremony—were thus butchered; and the poor Mexicans must have thought, "the gods are come down among us in the likeness of very cruel men indeed." No wonder that after Mexico was taken the

cities were abandoned at the approach of the invaders, and the inhabitants took to the woods.

What most thinned the numbers, and brutalised the nature of the Indians was, not the diseases brought amongst them by the Spaniards,* not even the waste of war, but the "encomiendas"—i.e., apportionment of a thousand, more or less, to every Spaniard to till his land; work his mines, if he had any; carry his burdens; be, in fact, his slaves. Such a life was intolerable to any one of high spirit; and there was no remedy, no deliverer. Even the Church, which, in Europe in the dark ages, had been the haven of refuge for the oppressed serfs against the conquerors who oppressed them, was closed to the Indian. He was a heathen, and, therefore, outside the pale of humanity. The Spaniards systematically destroyed all native documents, as well as buildings; their wish was to make the people forget their old glories along with their old traditions; and, when they began to convert wholesale, the chief thing they inculcated in their disciples was a hatred of the old faith, the children being trained to report any word or deed they saw at home which savoured of the old customs. Hence, a complete wiping-out of the past; and hence—though the ruins scattered broadcast over the land are probably little older than the advent of the Spaniards—as complete a severance between them and those who now shelter amongst them, as between the ruins of Baalbec and the Arabs who have set up their huts around its pillars.

One cannot give a fair idea of these remains without pictures. You can fancy a great truncated pyramid like those at Itzamal and Chichen-Itza; you can fancy capitals of columns carved with figures, like the oldest Romanesque work in so-called "Norman" churches, and lozenge-shaped diaper work covering flat surfaces, and the sides and edges of pillars enriched

* Europe has often, quite unfairly, charged certain diseases on America. These, as well as small-pox—"great leprosy" so the natives called it—came in with the filthy conquerors. Measles, too, was very fatal. To these Herrera attributes the death of nearly two-thirds the population. Then the conquest caused a fearful famine; and, above all, the devilish cruelty of their taskmasters—wholly beyond the experience of a patient, submissive people—brought on a profound discouragement and apathy. This told directly on the fecundity of the race, besides causing suicides to such an extent, that more than one Spaniard threatened to kill himself, and plague them far worse in the next world, unless they would consent to live and work. No wonder all these cities were soon left desolate and without inhabitants.

with dogtooth and lozenge mouldings, just like the "Norman." But you cannot fancy a colossal head like those forming part of the basement of the Itzamal pyramid. Of one of them which, alas! has since disappeared, Stephens says: "It is seven feet eight inches high, the features formed of small rough stones bedded in mortar, and then perfected with wonderfully hard stucco." Others still remain; and if M. Charnay's sketch is to be trusted, there is a strange likeness between them and the colossal Buddhas (Dai Butz) which used to be so revered at the Japanese temples; but which, now that that versatile people, the Japs, has gone back either to Nature worship, or to no worship at all, they are ready to sell for old copper to any one who will carry them off. Everything is found at Chichen-Itza: nunnery; monastery—for the Toltec faith had its monks and nuns, though they took vows only for a term of years; tennis court—the trick was to drive the ball through a stone ring, several of which are found in their places; palaces; and the grand temple-fortress, crowding the biggest pyramid. All these, the nunnery especially, are enriched with wonderful carvings, cornices, mouldings, architraves filled with what look like arabesques, but which are really inscriptions, of which the key is lost for ever. There is here no "Rosetta stone," with such a translation of the hieroglyphs into some known tongue as might help some future Champollion. The early Spanish writers give little or no help; and, though the modern "Maya" is probably more like the old Toltec than even the Coptic is to the Egyptian of the Pharaohs, that likeness will not help, seeing that the key of the writing is not forthcoming. Chichen-Itza was discovered by chance; some Indians were cutting down the jungle that the grass might grow and give their cattle pasture. Lorillard, rediscovered by M. Charnay on the Guatemalan frontier, is probably "the Phantom City" of Stephens—not that which he speaks of as still inhabited in the old style, the cocks being kept underground lest their crowing should bring in the Spaniards. It, too, has its great pyramid, its temples, its quaintly sculptured lintels. Its name of course, was given by M. Charnay, in honour of his American paymaster. What its real name was even tradition has forgotten. There are plenty of other cities—Kabab, with the same sort of bas-reliefs, and cornices, and pyramids;

Uxmal, richer in its decorations (the façade of the so-called "Governor's house" is a marvel of intricate carving, so is the nunnery). It, too, has a pyramid like the rest, crowned with a very perfect palace called "the Dwarf's house."

"An old woman," says the legend, "vexed at having no children, took an egg, wrapped it in a cotton cloth, put it in a corner, and watched it daily. One morning the shell cracked, and a tiny being stretched out its arms to her. The old woman was in raptures, took it to her heart; got it a nurse with so much milk that at the year's end it walked and talked as well as a full-grown man; but it stopped growing. In her joy the old woman vowed the Dwarf should be a great chief, and sent him to the King for a trial of strength. He begged not to go, but she insisted. So he was brought into the Royal presence, and threw down his glove.

"Lift that stone of three robes," said the King; but the Dwarf went back crying to his mother.

"Nonsense," said she; "if the King can lift it, you can do the same."

The King took up the stone, so did the Dwarf; and in many other feats of strength he kept neck and neck with His Majesty.

At last, in a rage the King said: "You puny little thing, I could stand you on the palm of my hand, and yet you outbrave me. Build a palace higher than this we are in, or you shall die."

Again, the frightened Dwarf went back to the old woman, who comforted him, and bade him go quietly to sleep; and, behold, next morning, mother and son woke up in this "Dwarf's house," the supporting pyramid having also grown up in the night.

The King was startled, and bade the Dwarf bring two bundles of hard-wood stick.

"Now, I'll hit you over the head," said he, "and then you shall hit me."

Off went the Dwarf lamenting to his mother, who put a "tortilla" on his head, and sent him back.

All the courtiers were collected, and the duel began.

The King struck, but every stick was broken one after another, and the Dwarf was not in the least hurt.

"Now," cried he, "it's your Majesty's turn to stand fire."

The King would have shirked, but in the presence of all his nobles he could not go from his word; so the Dwarf

struck, and at the second blow the King's skull was broken in pieces.

The spectators immediately proclaimed the Dwarf their King. But when he went to tell his mother she had disappeared.

Howbeit in Mawi, a village fifty miles off, is a deep well leading to a subterranean passage which reaches to Merida. In this passage runs a river, and there under the shade of a huge tree sits the old woman with a serpent by her side. She doles out water to thirsty passers-by, but will take no money; what she must have are babes, innocent babes, which are at once devoured by her serpent. She is the Dwarf's mother.

Their vast extent has made some think that the buildings in these cities must have been built during many successive centuries. The latest investigators say "No."

The Toltecs had a wonderful genius for building; under Spanish rule they rebuilt Mexico, and Tula, and other cities in an incredibly short space of time; and the task-work under their native Princes was almost as severe as under the Spaniards. They were adepts, too, at carving and moulding in cement. Some of the earlier churches built by them are wonderfully good; and some horses' heads carved soon after the conquest are as good as Greek work.

Indeed, the palace at Mitla, where Quetzalcoatl, the virgin-born, had his last home upon earth, is compared by the architectural writer Viollet-le-Duc to the famous buildings in Cambodia, which the natives of that country are as incapable of raising as they are of solving integral equations. At Mitla there is a marked difference of style in the carving, none of the "conventional" work which, rich and beautifully executed though it is, always strikes one as childish; it is all panelling, and diaper, and rich cornices, either in stone or plaster, or pebbles set in clay; in the building merely perpendicular walls and flat ceilings; none of the overlapping vaults, made by setting each stone a little further out than that below it, which in all the other ruins remind us of the vaulted work of old British tombs.

Talking of British work, the underground galleries found wherever there are ruins—some opened by the Mexican Government, but closed because the Indians seemed disposed to rise in rebellion—remind us of the "covered way" which exists close to every untouched "dolmen," and through which the head of the clan used to creep

into the inner chamber when he wanted to hold converse with, or take counsel of, his ancestors.

At Palenque, as was said, the resemblance to Japanese architecture comes out most strongly; and M. Charnay reminds us that, even now, the average of Japanese vessels wrecked on the Californian coast is two a year. He thinks—and he has seen all most thoroughly—that the civilisers of the Ana-hu-ac (Mexico) were from that side of the world. Who the Aztecs were—who came afterwards as conquerors, entering into the Toltec civilisation, not crushing it out but certainly not improving it—he does not pretend to guess.

We must not be too eager to insist on this Japanese or any other Eastern origin, from supposed shapes seen or imagined in the sculptures. Waldeck, for instance—positive, like all Germans—saw elephants' heads among the masks in the cornices at Copan; whereupon he argued either this was the work of Easterns who had carried with them the memory of the "serpent-handed beast," or it was wrought in the old, old time when the elephant did live in America along with the hipparion and other extinct creatures. But, no; closer investigation proves the supposed elephant heads to be caricatures—men with long tapir-like noses, others with big, pendulous ears, being found along with them.

These sculptors had a strong sense of humour, though hard usage has pretty well beaten it out of their descendants. The frequent use of the cross—both the Egyptian cross with ring-handle, and the *croix fleurie*—puzzled the Spaniards.* They saw in it a proof that the Devil, for his own ends, apes holy things. Some of the head-dresses on the conventional—what I have called childish—sculptures are just like mitres. We need not call in Satan here, any more than we need to account for the ladies' Louis Quinze head-dresses. Human nature is the same everywhere; and a mitre gives dignity when worn as it ought to be, and accompanied with proper vestments. A clever people, then, were those old palace and pyramid builders—not mere heapers together of huge mounds of stone. They had a calendar, and could foretell eclipses; and not two hundred years ago a good many of them on the Guatemala frontier were still independent—fighting one another, though the Spaniard was steadily annexing them.

* You also find among the ruins that form of the cross called "swastika," common to Egyptian monuments and pre-Christian Norse runes.

Their picture-writing—preserved in the Ramirez and Perez manuscripts—resembles the Egyptian frescoes in this, that the conqueror is always represented much larger than the conquered. The defeat of a nation is marked by a small corniced building, before which stands a huge invader with lighted torch.

There is plenty yet to be explored, though every year something is lost by decay, or through the mischievousness of the Indians, who pick out the mosaic, believing that, after a time, it will turn into gold.

The whole land round Palenque (Tollan was its old name) is full of remains. José Calderon, in 1774, found there eighteen palaces, twenty other big buildings, and one hundred and sixty-eight houses, in one week. It is now all forest, the trees shooting up so fast that they make, in a month, the ring which old naturalists used to think marked a year's growth; hence the calculations of data based on the number of rings in a tree, need to be divided by twelve. This monstrous vegetation shows the dampness of the climate; and hence the difficulty of taking proper "squeezes." These have to be dried round huge fires, and packed away before the moisture has made them flabby and taken the sharpness out of the impressions. Of course paper is better than plaster, being a hundredth part of the weight; but the process is more difficult. It is often, however, the only way; for many of the best slabs are so placed that they cannot be photographed; and drawings, such as Stephens gives, must always be unsatisfactory.

And the people! Degraded; their Christianity much like the old heathenism save that it has no human sacrifices. They still keep up their old dances. Some of the Mestizas are beautiful (says M. Charnay) beyond expression; but they are poor creatures, given to destroy telegraphs for the sake of the wire; and of all their old arts only possessing that of shaping gourds, while on the tree, into various elegant forms, and then painting them with colours which are faster than any known to Europeans.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "*Gerald*," "*Alexia*," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER VI VINCENT.

PAUL's little world at River Gate had not been very peaceful while he was away.

He had the best of it, out in the quiet country, with the easy and agreeable companionship of M. de Montmirail, and the silent friendliness of cows, sheep, and butterflies.

Vincent was in a terrible temper that Sunday afternoon. He visited his private griefs on his mother and the servants, finding out that his packing for India had been entirely neglected, though, in fact, her head and their hands had been busy with it for a week past. He tormented every one frightfully for about two hours that hot afternoon—every one but Celia, who kept prudently out of the way. At last, Mrs. Percival began to see that he was growing more calm, and beginning to believe her assurances that everything had been thought of. She could not exactly be angry with Vincent, when he was going to leave her the next day, probably for years; but his selfish, inconsiderate, ungrateful complaints and grumbling, were almost too much for her generally charming temper, and she was looking quite pale and tired when she escaped at last into her shady sitting-room, sank into a low chair, and took up a fan. Hers, however, was one of those natures which rebounds instantly, and sees the bright side of things in spite of itself. Of course she loved her son, and his going away was a serious trouble to her; but, at the same time, she was conscious that his departure meant peace. Perhaps, after all, he would be ordered home before so very long; and in the meantime Celia's affairs would be happily and irrevocably settled; there would be no more anxiety on that account. But Mrs. Percival decided, as she fanned herself, that she really could not tell Vincent of Celia's engagement to-day. Celia must be left to manage her own affairs; and, being now harder-hearted than in the morning, Mrs. Percival reflected that Vincent was perfectly able to take care of himself. The Canon was right; neither of these young people was a fool.

As Mrs. Percival comforted herself thus, the door was opened impatiently and Vincent came in. Her little room, and especially her very comfortable sofa, was a favourite refuge of his on these summer afternoons; it looked over trees and down the river, away from the Cathedral, which Vincent did not care to contemplate, and away from its chimes, which he hated to hear.

"Very well," said Mrs. Percival, when her son came in, and flung himself as usual on the sofa. "I see you have a

horrid headache still. So have I. You had better go to sleep for an hour, my dear."

Vincent made no reply at once. Presently he said: "Mother, I have something on my mind."

"I hoped it was all off your mind by this time," said Mrs. Percival. "Something else forgotten?"

"No, no, mother! don't go on plaguing about that. It is something you will have to do for me while I am away."

"Oh certainly! What is it?"

"Take care of Celia."

To say that these words startled Mrs. Percival, would be speaking very mildly. They literally took her breath away. She gasped, and her pale face became crimson. Vincent, staring out of the window, was not instantly aware of her consternation; but her silence made him look at her.

"What's the matter?" he asked, with something like a smile. "I say, what the deuce have I said?"

"Take care of Celia!" Mrs. Percival repeated, in a stifled, horrified whisper.

"You think I ought to make a better match—is that it?" he said coolly. "I think I am old enough to judge for myself. Anyhow, I mean to marry Celia. Not just yet, of course. But I have friends out there who can get me a staff appointment, if they exert themselves; and then, if I can't get leave, she can come out to me. Many girls do the same; it's nothing. As for being poor, of course we shall be poor. You are surprised, of course; you did not expect it. I am rather surprised at myself. But there are times in a man's life when the only thing to say is, 'prudence be hanged!' and this is one of them, my dear mother, you see."

"Vincent, I don't know what to say to you!" exclaimed Mrs. Percival. "How could you? What a dreadful, dreadful thing!"

Her son stared at her now in some astonishment; he had not expected that his announcement would be so terribly hard to swallow. Mrs. Percival started up from her chair, and walked away from him to the farthest window, swinging her fan backwards and forwards violently, while the sudden colour fled from her face, leaving her painfully pale.

"Would any one believe that a woman could be so worldly!" said Vincent in a voice of extreme irritation. "Your niece is left without a penny; you have her to live with you. A pretty girl; more than

that—one of the most beautiful girls in England, and the most taking. You make use of her from morning till night. Your own daughter, if you had one, would not be half such a slave. She tires herself to death doing your flowers and things, and works like a horse entertaining people at your stupid parties. And after all that, because I happen to appreciate her, you speak to me as if I had committed a crime. 'A dreadful, dreadful thing!' How could I—how could I do anything else, I wonder? Upon my word, I don't understand you. The way you take it is extraordinary."

Great are the inconsistencies of human nature. This same man, twenty-four hours before, would have said it was impossible that he should marry his cousin; would have hardly confessed, then, that he was very much in love with her. Strange inconsistency, and strange effect of a little opposition!

During these disagreeable remarks of Vincent's, Mrs. Percival stood at the window and collected her wits. She realised that the person to be blamed was not Vincent, but Celia, who must have deceived him for her own amusement in some unaccountable way. It must have been merely for amusement; she could not think of jilting Paul. Vincent, poor thing! might be carried away by his feelings—a girl like Celia, never: at least Mrs. Percival could hardly believe it.

"Does Celia know?" she said, without looking round.

"I told her yesterday," Vincent answered. "She would not listen. I suppose she thought it wouldn't do: girls don't understand. But she will find I am not to be put off like that. As to saying anything more to her now, I am not sure. I shall write to her. In the meanwhile, you have got to see that nobody else carries her off. Her having no money is a protection, of course: men in these days don't run after poor girls, however pretty they may be."

Vincent's way of talking was characteristic of him, and did not surprise his mother much, though perhaps it struck her more painfully than ever before. However, she was at present possessed by one thought; this affair must be cleared up; whether Celia wished it or not, Vincent must know all, and understand plainly that there was no hope for him.

Mrs. Percival turned away from the window, came back to her chair, and sat down. Her face was full of trouble; she

played with her fan, and did not look at Vincent, who watched her with a curious, sardonic expression.

"I am to understand then, Vincent," she said, "that Celia has refused you?"

"Something of the kind," he said. "It was impossible; she couldn't; and so forth. You have brought her up to be as prudent as yourself."

"You need not say that. Besides, Celia has only lived with me for a few months, as you know. She gave you no reason—no real reason, I mean?"

"No. I believe she said what she thought she ought to say. You would object; it would be ruin to me, and the rest of it. All that is my affair, as I shall make her understand. She will say 'yes' in the end."

"I think not, Vincent."

"Why?" he said angrily.

"She ought to have told you herself; it is no use telling half the truth. She was right so far, you know. Your father and I must have objected strongly to such an absurd marriage for you. It would not have been for Celia's happiness either; and I am bound to think of that."

"You had better leave that to us, mother. What do you mean, though?"

"Celia is the kind of girl who ought to marry a rich man. You may believe me, Vincent, when she refused you, she meant it."

"And where is the rich man to come from?" he said, frowning. "Upon my word, you talk in plainer English than most people. Celia a girl to refuse a man because he is poor! Why you should attribute such motives to your niece I cannot conceive," said this suddenly unworldly hero. "She refused me because she thought it was her duty. You can't understand her; she is a far finer girl than you think. Let me tell you she likes me too much to refuse me for any other reason."

"I tell you, Vincent," said his mother, looking at him now, and speaking quite solemnly, "Celia refused you because she means to marry a rich man! And she ought to have told you the whole truth about it."

"Nonsense! How could she tell me such a thing as that? You are losing your senses. Besides, it's not true!"

Mrs. Percival flushed a little, but answered him very quietly:

"I have no doubt you made it difficult for her. Now prepare yourself, for I must

tell you what you will think bad news. Celia is engaged. Now you know the truth about it."

"To a rich man?" asked Vincent, with sneering coolness, though his eyes flashed, and a curious white look came into his face.

"Yes, to a rich man. No one knows of the engagement except your father and myself. Unless you insist, perhaps I need not tell you who it is. He does not belong to this neighbourhood."

"Young Romaine, for instance?" said Vincent; and he yawned.

"Why do you think so? Yes, it is Paul Romaine. And I think Celia is a fortunate girl."

"How long has this been going on?"

"Since he left Oxford in June. He was here for a few days then; you were away."

"And what excellent object was gained by not telling me?"

"I don't know, Vincent, really," his mother said, after a moment's hesitation. "Celia wished most particularly that no one should know. We wanted to have a quiet, comfortable summer. He being so young, there was no hurry, and he was going abroad for some weeks—he has only just come back, you know. Your father and I agreed with Celia: we were glad to say nothing. I meant to tell you about it in my first letter this week. Of course, when we leave Woolsborough and go to Holm, it won't matter; everybody must know soon. And if I could have foreseen such a complication as this—well, I have had my fears—but your father and I both thought that you and Celia were too sensible for any nonsense, and we knew you did not particularly like Paul; and we thought it would be pleasanter."

Vincent threw himself back on the sofa, and burst into a loud fit of laughter. His mother, it must be confessed, felt more inclined to cry. In the course of her easy, luxurious life, she had hardly ever met with anything so disagreeable.

"Miss Celia—well, she is a clever girl!" Vincent exclaimed at last.

"If she has encouraged you—if she has flirted with you, she has behaved shamefully," said Mrs. Percival. "My dear, believe me, I am most dreadfully sorry that this has happened."

"So am I. You have made me look like an uncommon fool. But you need not blame Celia; she snubbed me as much as she could, and made me very angry."

He was quiet enough now: he even

seemed, for some mysterious reason, to be in a better temper than before he heard the news which made his case hopeless. Mrs. Percival saw that the awful scene of ravings and reproaches, which she had feared, was not to take place after all; she felt comforted accordingly.

"I do hope you will forgive us, Vincent dear," she said. "You know what a trouble this is to me; and I feel that we have all treated you so badly. One tries to act for the best, and then this sort of thing happens. I think Celia must be very sorry too. I am sure she is—she likes you so much, and you have been so happy together all this time. Can't you understand a little, dear, that we didn't wish to interfere with such a nice, cheerful summer? But now I do hope you will go away and forget all about it. I assure you Celia was not quite the right sort of girl for you to marry, I mean—never could have been. She is very dear, and nice, and all that; but there is not very much in her. If either of you had had enough money—even then I should have been sorry—I couldn't have approved. First cousins, too—such a pity!"

As Mrs. Percival gently chattered thus, she was looking her sweetest; the trouble had gone out of her eyes, and they were smiling and shining as usual; her pretty hands caressed her fan. One of the little dogs came scratching at the door before she had quite done; she got up and let him in, talking all the time. She had had a bad quarter of an hour, certainly; but like a certain King of old, she now seemed to think that its bitterness was past.

"And you are going to marry Celia to that boy! Celia!" Vincent muttered half to himself, without taking any notice of her explanations. "That is what you call a rich man! And you think those two suited to each other, do you?"

"He is a rich man, and a very dear fellow," said Mrs. Percival rather faintly.

"A muff and a milkop, with his head wrapped up in books and organs. However, if you are pleased—and Celia——"

He got up and marched out of the room.

Mrs. Percival drew a long breath, fanned herself, and stroked her little dog.

"Oh, my Toto!" she said. "Why are not men so nice as little dogs?"

When Captain Percival left his mother, he went heavily downstairs and out into the garden, feeling himself a terribly injured man. This concealment of a fact that touched him so nearly might be apologised

for; it could hardly be forgiven. They had all behaved to him abominably. If he had been a gossiping girl, they could not have treated him with more insulting distrust. Early in the summer, when this was arranged, he would not have cared a straw who Celia married: now it was a different thing. Celia herself must have known perfectly well that he was falling in love with her; her behaviour had been heartless, especially yesterday, when she laughed at him, and drew him on—yes, she certainly drew him on, only to laugh at him. He would not confess it to his mother, but Celia's behaviour had made him very sore. He had been ready to give up everything for her. She, with her affairs comfortably arranged, must indeed have laughed at him for a fool. She unselfish? No, truly. "Anyhow I couldn't do this," she said; no, for a very good reason—I am going to do something I like better. And that maddening smile in her eyes all the time.

Vincent paced up and down the garden, thinking at first that he would go to London that night, and see none of them again. People who had treated him so odiously were not worth a regret. His father, too; but he did not waste many thoughts on him, not having much esteem for his father. His mother and Celia were the people he wanted to punish. After all, starting off at once would be uncomfortable to himself, and would do them no harm; they might even be glad to get rid of him. Wandering along, his angry face bent towards the ground, he had reached one of the lower walks of the garden, a grass walk, backed by a tall hedge of laurustinus, bordered with a bright confusion of flowers, and looking straight over the old wall to the river, the meadows, the soft distant view of that country through which Paul was now returning. And at the end of this walk there was a summer-house, fenced in by roses; and in the shadow, as he came near, Vincent caught sight of a figure in a white dress. He had been arranging with himself, a moment before, that he would treat Celia with the coldest contempt, and hardly even speak to her, except to say good-bye. But this resolution had been made when Celia was nowhere near; and now another moment brought him to the summer-house. She got up, looking pale in the trembling shadows, and her eyes were anxious, though she smiled.

"Is the packing all done?" she said. "Does Aunt Flo want me?"

"No, she doesn't want you," said Vincent; "but I do. Don't be frightened. I only wish to offer you my—congratulations, I suppose, on your brilliant prospects."

Celia looked at him; she was not smiling now. His look and tone of bitter coldness and anger roused some defiance to meet it. She coloured, drew herself up, and waited silently.

"I have only just been told what I should have known all the summer," Vincent went on. "I consider that I have been abominably treated. I have been cheated and deceived. My mother knows what I think, and I shall not forgive her or my father. As to *you*"—and his voice suddenly changed—"Celia—Celia!"

It was a cry of real passion, and Celia was frightened; not so much perhaps at him, as at the sudden and overpowering wave of feeling in herself which answered it. What was to happen, indeed, if she could not hold her own now!

Vincent came a step nearer, and took both her hands, looking down into her eyes and speaking in a low voice, terrible to her from its very restraint. She bit her lips and stood before him like a statue.

"Has my mother told me the truth?" he said. "Is it true that you are engaged to young Romaine? Why did not you tell me yesterday, or weeks ago? Why did you make me love you, only to end like this? Answer me, Celia."

"Because—if you were nice like other people," murmured Celia in desperation, "one wouldn't be afraid to tell you things. As to making you—you know that is false. I have done nothing of the kind. When you said those things yesterday I was dreadfully sorry; but I did not bring it on myself, you know I did not. Let me go, please. Yes, I am engaged. Let me go."

He dropped her hands, but still stood in the door of the summer-house, so that she could not pass.

"Why did not you tell me yesterday, in the boat?" he said. "Why were you afraid? What could I have done?"

"You might have upset the boat," she answered, with a faint smile. "You said you would, once."

"A witch like you could not have been drowned."

"A baby could—and you were not sure which I was, yesterday."

She was glad, for a moment, of this

return to the old terms of chaffing and nonsense that seemed natural between them. But, after all, an angry distance would have been better. The anger was fading out of his face, but it was not succeeded by indifference.

"Celia, you are an awful girl," he said. "You break one's heart, and won't let one be angry with you. What nonsense it is, this engagement! My mother made it up, of course. You *can't* marry a fellow like that—you. Break it off, Celia dear, for my sake, and come out to me as soon as I can send for you—or marry me to-morrow morning, if you will. I felt sure, don't you see, that you would not say no, and I began telling mother my plans just now, and she crushed me with this horrible news. I daresay it drove me mad, at first, and I did not know what I was saying. If I have spoken to you like a brute, forgive me, Celia!"

If Vincent could have known how Celia was fighting against herself at that moment, and how joyfully half of her would have given itself to him, his victory would not have been doubtful for two minutes longer. But he did not know, and thought her coldness greater than it really was; and so he went on talking, with a doubt of his success, which every moment became more unlikely. If Celia had time to think, the prudent and the practical were sure to gain the day. And then, long before his hopeless pleading was finished, came Mrs. Percival's voice calling over the garden—"Celia, Celia"—and his cousin turned to him, her eyes wonderful in their depth of smiling blue, and said:

"Some day you will know it is all for the best. Look here; cousins have a right to be very fond of each other, and I shall always be very fond of you."

Vincent laughed.

"Cold comfort, my dear," he said. "Fond or not, I have been horribly treated. Celia, I think you might kiss me once, to make up for it all."

"Aunt Flo is coming," Celia said; but she did not think it necessary to carry her snubbing any further: poor Vincent was quite tame now, and was going away to-morrow.

They strolled up the garden together; and when Mrs. Percival met them, though Vincent was melancholy, Celia was laughing. Mrs. Percival looked at her niece with admiration and wonder.

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"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER VI.

FRED.

IF May could have seen Fred when her letter reached him, her misgivings about it would have been much more than confirmed. He tore it open as he lay in bed, to look greedily for the cheque, which he extracted, read, and flung on the floor with a curse. The letter itself he tossed aside unread, until he had dressed and breakfasted, when he took it up impatiently and glanced through it with disgust.

He felt sorely ill-used. What had he gone to college for? To please his father and "his people"—for he most assuredly did not want to go there himself—and here was their return! In college a fellow had to live with other fellows and like other fellows, and this could not be done on nothing a year. As he came here to please them, the least they could do was to support him here suitably.

Fred seemed always to consider his future—his prospects or profession—as none of his own concern at all, but his father's solely. The present, indeed, was Fred's so entirely and exclusively, that it was monstrous to expect him to give up any of it, either in study or otherwise, to this future, which was his father's look-out entirely and exclusively. Fred did not, of course, think the thing out in this precise way; but, what he did think about it, came to this pretty precisely.

Yet, underneath this sincere sense of sore ill-usage—so entirely underneath it as to be smothered out of sight and felt only vaguely—was a vague feeling of disgust at

his own ill-usage of his father, especially in that matter which was hinted at in May's letter.

Now, to be disgusted with yourself, makes you as irritable as suppressed gout, since there is no outside vent for its relief; and Fred was roused into a state of extreme irritation by poor May's mild letter.

He was not, therefore, in the happiest humour for receiving an unwelcome visitor; yet, though no visitor could have been more unwelcome than the gentleman who presented himself immediately after breakfast, Fred received this Mr. Dredge with even more than his usual genial effusiveness.

"Have some breakfast?"

"No, thanks," replied Mr. Dredge, a shifty-eyed young gentleman, who glanced at everything in the room, with the furtive and ill-used look of a fresh caught and caged monkey.

"A brandy and soda? Eh?" Fred asked, and without waiting for the certain assent of his guest, he proceeded to get out the soda-water and brandy.

Mr. Dredge, still seemingly looking everywhere for some outlet of escape, said surlily: "You haven't got it."

"Got it?" Fred asked innocently.

"You haven't, you know," rejoined Mr. Dredge doggedly, as though contradicting an assertion of Fred's. "You wouldn't wag your tail like that if you had," he added sagaciously, comparing Fred's effusive demonstrations to those of a dog deprecating chastisement.

"Oh, you mean that money," Fred answered with a not altogether successful attempt to dissimulate the fear and fury in his heart.

"I do; I mean it, mind you," retorted Dredge, furious also, but undisguisedly so.

not without reason from his own point of view. "Look here, Beresford; it's no good beating about the bush or dodging behind: you've been promising that money for more than a month——"

"And paying it, too," Fred interrupted him to say sullenly.

"At the rate of the National Debt," sneered Dredge; "but I am not likely to live so long as that on this stuff," he said, taking a pull at the brandy and soda. "You promised to pay me fifty pounds to-day without fail, and I promised to pay it to-day without fail to Smithers. Have you got it?"

"I haven't," Fred answered defiantly in an uncontrollable outburst of irritation, for Mr. Dredge's manner was maddening.

Mr. Dredge drank at a draught the rest of the brandy and soda, rose, and taking up his hat and stick with studied deliberation and looking round the room at every object in it except Fred himself, said: "I shall do what I can for you with Smithers, but nothing that I can do will make him wait beyond Saturday." Without another word Mr. Dredge turned and left the room.

Upon his departure Fred paced the room in a frenzy of mingled fear and fury; his fear growing as his fury sank. It was hardly more than six months since his father had come up to extricate him from an exceedingly ugly gambling scrape, and here was another at least as ugly and as desperate. He dared not disclose it even to his father. Yet how, without disclosing it, could he extract from his father this fifty pounds ransom? Or, would his father even be able to command such a sum on so short a notice? As Fred shrank with a shudder of aversion from making a full confession to his father, he found it easy to persuade himself that such a confession would avail him nothing, since his father could not send him such a sum at an hour's notice. He would have had no doubt of his father's ability to raise thrice the sum at as short a notice, if a confession had not been in question; but the idea of confession was so abhorrent to him that he was glad to look away from it, to find any other reason for shrinking from an application to his father.

Failing his father, he must try his friends—a forlorn hope; for he was in debt already to those of them who were the likeliest to be at once able and willing to help him. However, he must make the attempt; and he did with the result of

reducing his friends to his own bankrupt state, instead of bettering this estate by their help.

Thus Fred found his pennilessness infectious as the plague; for everyone he approached caught it at once and became as impecunious as himself—everyone with the exception of Gower.

Gower was not a generous young man, but he had for Fred the calf-infatuation of a schoolboy for a hero, who seems to him pre-eminent in all the manly virtues—smoking, drinking, gambling, "*et hoc genus omne*." Fred's assured and easy manner captivated Gower, who was shy while Fred's effusive affectation of generosity imposed completely upon his friend. Fred was always effusive in offering to do anything not wanted, or to serve any one in need of nothing; and he had, besides, a deftness in palming off his most self-regarding acts as done in the sole interest of a friend.

But if Gower was so taken in by his friend, Fred, on his part, misunderstood Gower. Having for him the contempt he felt for other worshippers, he had not the least idea of his real character; for nothing—in this matter of insight into character—is so blinding as contempt. Fred noticed nothing more in Gower than he would have noticed in the dog at his heel, which was fawning, tractable, and companionable—as was Gower. He knew so much of the dog at his heel as touched himself—the least part of his character, that is—and of his friend's character he knew and suspected no more. To him Gower was credulous, humble, yielding, easy-going, and good-natured; and Fred had not the least suspicion that his friend was as selfish as himself; was obstinate as a mule; had plenty of that short-sighted animal cleverness called cunning; and, in spite of his shyness, had a very excellent opinion indeed of himself. Since shyness indicates only excess of self-consciousness, it goes quite as often with conceit as with humility; and the shyest men of all are those whose seeming diffidence is due to their dread of giving others a lower opinion of them than they have of themselves. Anyhow, Augustus Gower's shyness was consistent, not only with conceit, but with a kind of secret coxcombry.

Fred found him in his rooms, which were a sort of photographic zenana, for the beauties of the shop-windows covered their walls. Gower was a devout, though distant, adorer of female loveliness; and not

the least of Fred's titles to his admiration was the envied ease of his friend's manners and of his conquests when the sex was concerned.

"Thought I'd look you up, old chap; haven't seen you for an age," Fred said in his cheery manner and with a seemingly disengaged mind.

Gower, an uninteresting-looking youth, tall, fair, with grey-blue eyes, sandy hair, a narrow forehead, a rabbit mouth ever agape, and a rather receding chin, was greatly pleased by Fred's visit. It was an unusual honour, since he sought Fred in his rooms a dozen times for once that Fred sought him. Fred, having submitted to be made comfortable in an easy-chair and with a good cigar, opened the campaign warily after his manner.

"It's well to be you," he said, after a few puffs, taking the cigar from his mouth to look at it appreciatively.

"Why?" asked Gower, flattered by the envy of the envied.

"You don't know what it is to be hard up for one thing. It's like being shut into a sentry-box where you can neither stir nor breathe—infernal thing!" exclaimed Fred fretfully. "But, besides," he hastened to add, as though in fear of his friend's offering him help; "but, besides, you know how to make the most of money. How many fellows would give me such a weed as that?" he said, taking it from between his lips and knocking the ash off its end; "and some of 'em are just rotten with money."

"Thought you'd like it," replied Gower complacently. "It's one of Jessop's 'BB's'."

"You'd be a long time coming to my rooms before you'd get a weed like this there. That's the worst of being poor, hang it! One wouldn't mind so much for oneself, if one could treat one's friends decently without getting into debt and those duns at one's throat."

This he spake with an emphasis which left no doubt at all of its being a personal and pressing experience.

"Who is it? Finch?" Gower asked, elated to find himself for the first time in the relation of Nestor to the accomplished Fred.

"Oh, I'm not going to bother you about it," Fred replied magnanimously. "I owe you enough as it is."

"Is it much?"

"I might scrape through with a pony," replied Fred, with the usual debtor's disinclination to state his liabilities in full,

which not even the assurance of having them at once wiped out can overcome. Of course Fred had not such assurance or even hope. If he could get twenty-five pounds from Gower he might manage to scrape the rest together somehow; but even in Gower's contribution he was disappointed.

"A pony! I couldn't do more than a tenner at the outside."

"Oh hang it! it's too bad to come down always on you, only because you're such a good fellow."

"I'm good for a tenner anyway; I only wish it was more, old chap; but I'm nearly aground myself."

Hereupon Gower, having endorsed a cheque of his father's for eight pounds, handed it over to Fred with a couple of sovereigns wrapped up in it. Fred thanked him effusively, and waited to finish his cigar before he took his leave.

He returned slowly to his rooms, consumed by a sense of ill-usage. In all Cambridge he sincerely thought there was no more unlucky, unfairly treated and unhappy victim of circumstances, and of ingrate friends than himself; yet in all Cambridge, perhaps, there was no one deeper in the debt of his friends for unreturned kindnesses of all sorts.

As Fred neared his rooms in this mood, relentless Fortune dealt him such another blow as might have suggested to a much more patient person that he was pursued by the Furies. A little greasy man, with a blotched face and bleary eyes, who had been prowling about like a skulking hyæna in wait for its prey, made at once for Fred as he came in sight, approaching him not at all hyæna-fashion, but with a calculated audacity.

"Mr. Beresford?" he asked. "I am Mr. Pratt," he went on with an assumption of dignity in preposterous contrast to his appearance.

"Pattie Pratt's father!" thought Fred with a sinking heart. He had flattered himself that Pattie was one of his conquests, till he suddenly discovered that he was one of hers.

"May I ask, Mr. Beresford, if this is your handwriting, or not?" taking a packet of letters from his breast pocket with the browbeating air of a cross-examining counsel.

"No, it isn't," Fred retorted flatly, after a glance at the packet. He was so intensely relieved as to feel almost forgivingly towards the greasy little bully he had baffled.

The little man was chucked up suddenly upon his haunches, as it were; but only for a moment. Replacing the packet hastily in some confusion in one pocket, he took from another a similar budget.

"No, sir; those are not yours; they are from—from my lawyer, sir—from my lawyer," he reiterated, as having not only recovered his footing, but gained a more commanding position. His lawyer, however, must have corresponded with him through his daughter, to whom the letters were addressed. "These, sir—these are the documents I mean," he said, slapping with one hand packet number two, which he held in the other, and using what he considered legal language.

Fred, albeit not given to shamefacedness, coloured to the roots of the hair, and then grew suddenly white as he thought of the language of these letters.

"What do you want for them?" he asked hoarsely, losing all presence of mind.

"Sir, I am her father!" replied the little man, with an over-acted and almost grotesque assumption of outraged feeling.

"Yes," Fred rejoined impatiently, understanding him to make merely an auctioneer's puff to raise the bidding.

"I have a father's feelin's," retorted Pratt now, with a display of real indignation.

"How much for them?" asked Fred irritably, meaning, of course, not the feelings, but the letters.

But Pratt, knowing that he had the whip-hand of Fred, was now greatly enraged by what appeared to him the studied insolence of the young man's manner.

"How much for 'em? You'll know how much for 'em before you're a day older! Do you hear? There's them that will tell you how much you'll get for 'em without your axing; and I hope you'll like what you'll get, you infernal young black-guard!" he cried, with a sudden outburst of fury, which served his purpose infinitely better than his maudlin assumption of outraged fatherly feeling.

If he carried out his threat Fred was certainly and utterly ruined. Of this he had no doubt at all. When Pratt hurried away, therefore, Fred followed him:

"Look here," he said breathlessly, as he came up with him. "I didn't mean to offend you—I was worried about something. Come to my rooms and let us talk it over—I mean, I want to explain

and to apologise, if you will come to my rooms."

Pratt, with much show of sullen reluctance was induced to turn back with him.

"A father has his feelin's, young man, even if he is in the oil and colour trade," he said with much-offended dignity, as he walked back with Fred; who found these feelings an expensive article. It needed a good deal of brandy, and some diplomacy, to bring Pratt to state his terms, which Fred was horrified to find were the same as those demanded by Dredge. It was not, however, as he imagined, a mere coincidence that these two harpies should swoop down on him at the same time and for the same sum, since it was Dredge's indiscreet babbling that suggested to Pattie and her father the idea of forestalling him.

PARISH BOOKS.

FIVE years ago a Bill was brought into the Commons, to transfer the care of the parish books from the parsons to the Master of the Rolls. It was put aside for the present, like almost everything else, because "the Irish Question blocks the way." When we get the road clear, it is one of the first things that must come on; for, though so much mischief has been done already that to make a change is a little like locking the stable door when the steed is stolen, still, the registers, though safe nowadays from more active agents of destruction, are not seldom kept in boxes so damp that every year the writing on the parchment becomes paler and paler.

The clergy have generally respected the fabric of the church; but for the books they have had, in most cases, very scant regard. Read the Report of the House of Commons Committee, in 1835, and you will find that one sporting parson cut his parchment leaves into labels for the game that he sent to his friends.

The Huntingdon Peerage Case was sorely perplexed, because many leaves from the books of Christchurch, Hants, had been used by a Curate's wife to line kettleholders.

Then there were the frequent frauds: the old novelists' stock trick of taking out a leaf or putting one in, had facts enough to justify it. The Duchess of Kingston did both; and she certainly had not a monopoly of that kind of thing.

Then, there was carelessness in entering. Many parsons still keep the books in their studies; and, instead of entering each event at once, allow the clerk to put them on a sheet of paper, or day-book, whence they are supposed to be copied in periodically.* In the copying, omissions were often made; thus, in Saint Saviour's, anciently Saint Mary Overies, Southwark, both the book and the loose sheets for the earlier part of the seventeenth century are preserved. The latter gives, "1625, August twenty-ninth; John Fletcher, a poet, bur. in the church, with an afternoon's knell of the great bell;" the former, copied in when the memory of Beaumont's fellow-worker was growing dim, simply says, "1625, August twenty-ninth. Mr. John Fletcher, a man, bur. in the church."

A more important omission came out in the case—well known to lawyers—of *May versus May*. In the day-book, the plaintiff was entered as "base-born;" but in the register this epithet was omitted, and the Court ruled that "there cannot be two registers in one parish, and therefore that the false entry which implied plaintiff's legitimacy, must prevail." In another case it was decided that the clerk's notes are no evidence at all, and that, therefore, the entry of a baptism dated February, 1776, but not copied in till more than a year after, could not be received. Indeed, so general was the distrust in what ought to be as trustworthy as a bond, that such a staunch Tory as Lord Eldon said: "Not one register in a hundred is kept according to law;" and another law-lord added: "You may well go further, and say not one is kept legally."

Of course one expects mis-spellings. Open almost any register and you may pick them out by the dozen. I remember once in West Cornwall tracing the variations of a local name—Warren; besides Wearne, Waring, Wearing, there were at least three more that I have forgotten, and all in the same century. The four variations which Mr. Chester Waters gives from Kensington parish church of the name of Methold, founder of Methold's Almshouses—one of those landmarks swept away by the Metropolitan Railway—Meathell, Mathowld, etc., all occur in less than forty years; and are

explainable, because the Norfolk village, after which this first English visitor to Golconda (see *Purchase's "Pilgrims,"* vol. v.) was named, is often locally pronounced Mewold.

I hope the confusing entry which registered Mr. Anchetil Grey as Miss Anne Kettle Grey is an extreme case; as doubtless is that which may be seen in the parish book of Kirkby Moorside: "1687. Georges vilau, Lord dooke of bookingham. bur. 17 Apl." That was the finale of the scene which Pope describes "in the worst inn's worst room."

Had the Bishops insisted on the seventieth canon (of 1603) being carried out, there would be fewer gaps in our genealogies. The canon provided that all existing registers should be transcribed on parchment, and the copies placed in the registry of each diocese; and also that every year a copy of all the entries in all parish-books should be sent in to the respective Bishops.

Unhappily, though the canons were not only passed in Convocation summoned by King's writ, but were also confirmed by King's writ, they were in this case seldom acted on. Who was to make the transcripts? It was nobody's business, i.e. no one could claim any fee for doing it: the parish would seldom be at the cost of it; and the Bishops were indignant at the idea of their paying. The King's Bench decided that the canon was binding on the clergy, but not "*proprio vigore*" (whatever that might mean) on the laity. The parsons, however, seldom obeyed, and nobody troubled himself to make them do so. Perhaps they felt that, in the state into which Bishops' registries had been allowed to fall, it was a farce to send up documents, the chief value of which depended on their being ready for immediate consultation. "Dry rubbish to be shot here" might well be the motto on those registries which were not quite as damp as some vestries and church chests.

Not till 1812 were the Bishops invited by the Privy Council to survey their registries, and to think over a plan of payment for having the contents arranged and indexed. Not a single report has ever been sent in, and the registers, says Mr. Waters, remain as they were. I can testify to the condition of two, on opposite sides of England.

From a West-country rectory garden a corner had clearly, at one time—not very remote, to judge by the foundation of an

* This system gave rise to a ludicrous notion of clerical longevity. The parson signed the copies, and in some cases these extend over eighty or ninety years; during which time some have gravely asserted the signer's life extended.

old wall—been snipped off, and joined to that of the next neighbour; but all efforts to get at the old “terrier” were in vain. It was as safe in the registry, as the sailor’s “kettle at the bottom of the sea.” In another case, a yearly charge, called “fee-farm rent,” is paid out of the tithes of a Norfolk parish; but when this alienation was made, whether it dates from Henry VIII.’s day, or whether some needy Rector, in the bad times, took that way of raising money there are no documents to show; and appeals to the Registrar bring the unsatisfactory reply: “You’re welcome to come and search for yourself,” with as much chance of succeeding as the sailor would have had, if he had taken a header after the lost kettle. Bishops’ registries, however, though in such a state of chaos and in spite of the gaps in their contents, have sometimes proved of good service. Where there is enough at stake people will even plunge into chaos; or, if they feel it is no use taking a header, they will get a diving bell and explore the sea-floor square inch by square inch.

Hence, in the Angell case, where something like a million sterling was at stake, the diocesan registry was searched, the transcript found, and the labouring man, who, having in the Parish Book altered Margaret Ange to Marriott Angell, was discomfited by the evidence of the Bishop’s transcript. He had won the first trial, when it occurred to somebody that this might be one of those cases in which the canon had been obeyed.

In the Leigh peerage case, in like manner, a baptism which had been expunged from the parish books of Wigan, was found in the Bishop’s transcript, and by its presence decided the suit.

Defacing the registers was sometimes a cheap luxury.

In Norborough, Northampton, the pages from 1613 to 1646 are wanting, the reason being explained by a subsequent entry, that “one Mr. John Claypole, a factious gentleman, caused the register to be taken away from one John Stoughton, then rector.” This factious gentleman was Cromwell’s son-in-law; and, I hope he made good the two pounds ten shillings which the Ecclesiastical Court of St. Martin’s granted to the Rector as satisfaction for the temporary loss of the book, and which was paid at the charge of the parish. The punishment seems slight enough; but Roundheads had it much more their own way in that neighbourhood than in Maid’s

Moreton, Bucks, for instance, where the post-Restoration entry vouches “on the word of a Priest, that, despite the laws to the contrary made since the worst of Parliaments wickedly rebelled against the best of Princes, no child was withheld from Church baptism, and no couple came together till they were solemnly wedded in the church, according to the orders of the Church of England.” Of very few parishes could that be said; and even in Moreton the register was not kept, because “one, called Colonel Purefoy, carried away what he could and hid the register.”

This is the invariable excuse for the gap which so generally occurs at that time: “the tymes were such.” But for other gaps there is a less valid reason. At Tunstall, in Kent, we read “1577, Mary Pottman nat. (born) and bapt. 15 April; Mary Pottman, nat. and bapt. 29 June; Mary Pottman dep., (buried) 22 Aug. From henceforward I omit the Pottmans.” They were too many for this parson’s patience.

At Stoke Newington, from 1617 to 1619 is marked as “a long vacation.”

At St. Peter’s, Dorchester, “1645. In 12 months died 52 persons, whose names are not inserted, the old clerk being dead who had the notes.”

Still, with all its irregularities, the old system is poorly replaced by the cut-and-dried formality of that which came in in 1835. The parson used to look on the parish book as his diary, sometimes even as his commonplace book. If he was of a reserved turn he kept his feelings to himself, only allowing himself the luxury of a “laus deo” at the birth, without accident, of one of his own children. If he was cynical, he put down burial entries like this:

“Bitteswell, Leicester, 1638. Mary Snelson is stark naught, stinking naught. Blot not this.”

And this:

“Sea Salter, Kent, 1734. John Housden, widower, a gape-mouthed, lazy fellow, and Hannah Matthews, not a pon’t, a toothless wriggling hag, were trammelled by licence at the Cathedral”—as this facetious parson called his church.

“Croydon, 1788. Mary Woodfield, a la’ ‘Queen of Hell.’”

“St. Peter’s-in-the-East, Oxford, 1568. Alyce, the wyff of a naughtie fellow, whose name is Matthew Manne.”

A parson may scold his parishioners for half-an-hour out of the pulpit without fear

of anyone getting up to contradict him; but it was too bad to make the register a means of recording petty spites. Of course the entries are often the other way.

Sometimes the religious animus comes in. Christian burial was forbidden by law to suicides, Anabaptists, Catholics, and excommunicated persons. Hence such entries as these:

"Warleggan, Cornwall, 1681. G. Piper, an Anabaptist, tumbled in y^e ground, Feb. 25."

"Toddington, Beds, 1728. Mary Shaw, widow, hurled into y^e ground, Aug. 26."

"Weedon Back, Northants, 1615. W. Badhouse, dying excommunicated, buried by stealth in the nighttime, 29th Jan. Whereupon the church was interdicted for a fortnight."

Such a church had to be "new hallowed," as Saint Mary's, Cambridge, was, after the burial of Bucer, the Reformer.

"Christ Church, Hants, 1604. Christian Steevens, buried by women, Apl. 14, for she was a Papishe."

The old palls still belonging to some London Companies, and to some of the Norwich churches, are but one item in the display which was in use at all but the very poorest funerals. Some of the Norwich palls are curiously embroidered, the souls of the dead figuring as baby-shapes passing out of the mouths of the corpses. Every parish had at least one guild, to which pall and other ornaments belonged, and of which one of the most important duties was the decent burial of its members. Our "Clubs" keep up the same custom; but their flags and scarves are no longer stored in the church.

A wake was as much a thing of course as it is in Ireland, though few were so provident as J. Cooke, of Sporle, Norfolk, who in 1528 put in his will "that myn executors make a drynkyng for my soul, to the value of vi^s. vii^d. in the church." Such entries are rare; yet, when bookseller Beet, of Little Britain, was buried in 1671 in Great Saint Bartholomew's, it was noteworthy enough for entry "that there was no sermon, nor wine and wafers; only gloves and rosemary."

"Undertaker" is quite a new word. Till after 1688, it was applied to those who undertook, at their own charges, to colonise a piece of land in Ireland or the plantations, on condition of getting a grant of it from the Crown.

With the Tudors began in Ireland the

plague of undertakers. Ireland was nearer than America; and, since the Spaniard had found out a "short method" with the Indians, why should not enterprising courtiers do the same with the native Irish?

After the Restoration the name began to be used of those who undertook to furnish funerals, "whereby persons of ordinary rank may for fifty pounds make as great a figure as the nobility and gentry did formerly for more than five hundred pounds."

The wool trade protested: "If the same cloaks, etc., furnish funerals for many years, the consumption of our manufacture will be greatly hindered, and the livelihoods of many thousand families destroyed."

In 1731, it cost his widow two hundred and sixty-nine pounds to get Andrew Carr, senior bencher of Gray's Inn, decently buried; the strangest thing in the bill being that a hearse and six horses only cost a pound; and fifteen pages in mourning were paid only two shillings each; while twenty-one hatbands are charged ten shillings and sixpence each; and thirty shillings is the price of a lute-string scarf, half-a-crown extra being set down if it was for a "divine." The whole bill—given in Mr. Chester Waters' very interesting book on Parish Registers, to which this paper owes many of its facts—is a model of exaction. There are men to help move the body downstairs; men to carry in the leaden coffin; men to carry in the velvet case; men to empty water out of vault; all separately paid for. And to finish off, the stone-cutter and his men, and the brick-layer and his labourer, get gratuities for "expedition." I should think that, though Mr. Carr never thought of having "a drinking for his soul," a good deal was drunk that night in his honour, in the parish of Saint Andrew, Holborn.

Of all this, fifty shillings, "paid the information for burying in velvet," might have been saved, had the law been complied with, and woollen, instead of "sarsnet," been used for shroud and lining.

This law was enacted in 1666, "to encourage woollen and prevent the importing of linen," by the same Parliament which, with the wisdom of the men of Gotham, forbade the importation of Irish cattle. Constantly evaded, it was made more stringent in 1678, the clergy having to note the fact in the parish book.

The moment the burial-service was over, the clerk would sing out: "Who makes

affidavit?" whereupon one of the relatives would have to come forward and satisfy the parson that he might make the required entry. Informations were common, for the informer got half the fine, and entries to this effect are not uncommon.

Fees, paid for christenings as well, were long the Curate's perquisite. But where the Rector was a married man, the wife would often insist on going halves. "The Curates' Conference (1641) complains grievously of this. In our own times, a parson's wife has sometimes contrived a silk dress out of hatbands, and has persuaded the undertaker to exchange her husband's gloves for her own size in Jouvin's or Dent's. The following looks as though somebody, Curate or Rector, was breaking the statute of Henry the Eighth, against accepting "corse presents." "Rype, Sussex, 1634. I buried Alice Whitesides, February twenty-second, a stranger, for whose mortuary I, John Goffe, had a gowne of Elizabeth, her daughter, price ten shillings." When a great person died, there was often, in several churches, a sham funeral, duly registered. Queen Elizabeth was buried in as many churches as Lord Anson was made churchwarden in.

On the whole we may be thankful that so many clergy acted up to the advice of Bishop Kennett, of Peterborough (1718), who advised the entering of strange occurrences, which would not otherwise be known.

Weather notes are too rare for those who believe in "cycles." The parish book of Youlgrave, Derbyshire, records in 1615, "the greatest snow that ever fell upon the earth within man's memorye . . . Fyve quarters deep upon the playne. It fell ten times, and encreased until 12 March, without sight of any earth, upon which daye, beinge the Lord's daye, it began to waste till 28 May, when all was consumed except one heap upon Kinder Scout, such lay till Witson week. . . . Upon May-day, instead of flowers, the youths brought in flakes of snow, which lay above a foot deep upon the moores." This severity was followed by a drought, no rain falling till August the fourth, except one shower in June. But this was only local, for "Lankisshyre and Cheshyre had rain enough all sumer; and both corne and hay sufficient."

The saddest entries are those about the plague, preceded as they are by many about various sweating sicknesses, one nicknamed "stop-gallant" (*trousse-galant*) because it chiefly attacked young folks in full health.

From "the Great Plague," Cheshire and Derbyshire suffered badly. The record of Malpas is a sad one: all the Dawson family died in a month, nine souls, one son having come from London and infected the house. One of the sons, "perceyving he must dye, arose out of his bed and made his grave, and caused his nefew to cast straw therein, and went and layed him down, and caused clothes to be layd uppon, and dep'ted out of this world. This he did because he was a strong man, and heavier than his said nefew and another wench—all that was left alive—were able to bury." It is noted in the Derby register—Saint Alkmund's—that the plague never entered a tobacconist's, tanner's, or shoemaker's shop.

No; I am wrong. Sadder than any of God's visitations are the records of man's wolfishness to man. The hanging of vagabonds "for being Egyptians," under a statute of Elizabeth, not repealed till 1783, is bad enough; but worse still are the witch killings. Of these I know of no entry in parish books. When Bishop Jewel and Sir M. Hale and Baxter denounced as unscriptural any tenderness to witches, such punishments were too much matter of course to be recorded.

Even when Mrs. Hicks, and her daughter aged nine, were hanged at Huntingdon, in 1716, "for raising a storm of wind, by putting off their stockings and making a lather of soap in a basin, in league with the devil" there is no note about it from the parson.

At Coggeshall, Essex, however, is the entry: "1699, Dec. 27. Widow Comon, that was counted a witch, was buried." The poor creature could never have recovered her three ordeals, recorded in June and July, when "she was thrown into the river to see if she would sink, and she did not sink but swam."

And this is as bad as witch hanging.

Saint Oswald's, Durham, 1590: "Duke, Hyll, Hogge, Holiday, Seminaries, Papysts, Tretors, and Rebels, were hanged and quartered for these horrible offences, 27 May."

Of penances there are plenty of entries. Sometimes the result was fatal. One woman at Croydon, who stood three days in a sheet, with a paper showing her sin, (1597), died within the week.

We have entries, too, of "Certificates to goe before the King for touching;" but pleasantest of all are the records of quarrels made up between neighbours:

"Twickenham, 1568. In presence of the hole paryshe was agreement made between Mr. Parker and hys wyffe, and Hewe Rytle and Sicyle Daye, of a slander upon the aforesayde Mr. Parker, Aprill 4."

A week later, in the same place, "Thomas Whytt and James Hern consented to live in Christian love and charyty, or to forfeit to the poor 3s. 4d., being dewlye proved."

Enough to show the stuff that registers are made of. In almost all there is something to repay you for puzzling through the old "court hand." Later on, almost the only notable entries are about "briefs," those collections under Royal recommendation, which, in the form of "Queen's Letters," lasted on till forty years ago. A poor way of getting money; unless they were pushed, the results were too often on this scale:

"Stock Harward, 1708, Apl. 25. Brief for Lisburn, in Ireland, lost by fire, £31,770; collected 7d.!"

When a man was to be bought from slavery, the response was more generous. In those days, Algerine pirates were often seen in the narrow seas, and anyone who went aboard ship felt he ran a risk of capture. Hence, at Scraploft, Leicester, 1679, July twenty-eighth, as much as one pound eleven shillings and three pence was gathered to redeem from the Turks the son of the Rector of Glostons.

When a man worked at it a "statutory brief" paid well. Bowyer, the printer, when his ship was burnt in 1712, raised in this way fifteen hundred and fifteen pounds; but it was a far cry to a place like Lisburn, and so the wise always farmed out their briefs to men who "worked" them professionally, pocketing, we may be sure, a very large percentage of the proceeds.

A last word about baptismal entries.

At St. Edmund's, Dudley, 1539, Sir W. Smithe Clarke, the Vicar, "whose name hath continued in Dudley from the Conquest," was an astrologer, and gives the hour of his son's birth, and the sign of the day—the middle of Aquarius—of the month, and of the planets of the day and hour. When the midwife baptized—see "Tristram Shandy—the name given was usually "Creature," i.e., of God. Children so baptized mostly died, and were buried as "Chrisoms;" yet we read: "Staplehurst, 1579. Married John Haffynden and Creature Cheseman, young folke, July 19."

Illegitimacy was often veiled in Latin. "Filius terræ" is a favourite form (it was the name also of the licensed jester at the Oxford Act, the old Commemoration); so is "filius populi;" but we find also scape-begotten, merry-begot, etc.; and among foundlings' names, Relictus Dunstan—found in that parish; Cuthbert Godsend, in a Durham church of that dedication; etc.

Perhaps the strangest baptismal entry is: "St. Marylebow, Durham, 1732. J. Graham, a felon, 30 Aug. He was hanged y^t same morn, just after his baptism."

Till Henrietta Maria married Charles, double names were very rare in England, and even then the fashion was confined to Court ladies.

Goldsmith ridicules in his Caroline Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs, the three names which a few vain folk were adopting; yet twenty years later we have the following: "Burbage, Wilts, 1781, Charles Caractacus Ostorius Maximilian Gustavus Adolphus, son of Charles Stone, tailor, 29 Apl."

Strange was the old custom which so puzzles the searcher of records of giving all the sons of a family the same Christian name. Protector Somerset had three sons named Edward, all living at the same time; and there are often entries like this: Raby, Leicest. 1559. 29 Aug. John and John, children of Xtopher and Anne Sicke."

Everybody knows about the Puritan names, e.g.: "St. Dunstan's, West London. 1599. 19 Apl. Repente, child of Thos. Kytchens." On the register at Chidingley, Sussex, there are Pious, Freegift, Constant, Faintnot, and Restore, between 1616 and 1631." But the oddest notion was the Puritans' preference of Jewish sinners to Christian saints. Ananias and Sapphira were favourites—a sister of Archbishop Leighton was Sapphira. "Such names bore testimony to the triumph of grace over sin."

Surnames were also used because contrary to Catholic usage; but this was held unlucky by Conservatives like Coke, though Fuller writes: "The good success of many so christened hath confuted the observation."

Of dog-whippers—alias dog-nopers—there are entries enough; an office needed, even where there was, as at Northcape, Lincoln, a "hall dog pew, in which to pen the Squire's dogs during service."

At Loughborough, in 1579, "a lioness brought to be seen of such as would give money to see her" tore a man to pieces.

At Teddington, in 1743, is entered the oath of one of those strange beings "who could often eat a shoulder of mutton or a eck of hasty pudding at a time, which caused his death, æt. 36."

Thus under the old system the parson might make his parish book as interesting as a monkish chronicle. He could tell by that form of words, on both sides, a man and wife were brought together again (at Bermondsey, in 1604) though she had married during his long absence; or how, at Saint Martin's, Leicester, 1576, a deaf and dumb man, "with approbation of the Bishop, the Commissary, the Mayor, etc.," was married in signs, "laying his hands upon his heart and then on her heart, and holding up his hands toward heaven, and to show his continuance till his life's end, he did it by closing his eyes, and digging out of earthen with his foot, and pulling as though he would ring a bell." He could even set posterity right as to renunciation; thus it is esteemed polite to say "Georgeana," but "at Wimbledon, 616, was baptized the Lady Georgi-Anna, daughter to the Right Honourable Earle of Exeter."

I say the old system; yet it is not so very old after all. I have heard even scholars ask for fifteenth-century registers, not knowing that everywhere the chronicles of the smaller monasteries (undoubtedly of the nature of registers; for Priors and Abbots were often called on to testify to age, etc., and supported their testimony by the Abbey "memoranda") were destroyed; and that not till 1535, did Thomas Cromwell bring in registration. It was hated as an adjunct of the Royal supremacy; and though in the parish book of Newbottle, a psalm is sung over "the annihilatynge of the bysshop of Rome, his long, falsely pretensyd and usurped powres," the "Pilgrimage of Ireece," distinctly charged on the King that he meant to levy "ane trybette," on every child at baptism. Sir Piers Edgcombe writes to Cromwell that the same idea is deeply rooted in the West. "This mistrust ys that somme charges more than hath byn in tymys past schall growe to heyms by this occacyon of specyfying namys of crystynyd, weddyd, and buryyd, in a booke."

In 1538, registration was made compulsory; and in all England there are said to be only eight parish books containing the entries for the three previous years. We owe registration (as we do the Reformed Calendar) to the Roman Church.

Cardinal Ximenes, scandalised at the frequency of divorces—people who wished to part having only to say that they were "god-sib" (gossips, spiritual kindred through their sponsors)—enacted in 1497, that in the Toledo diocese, at any rate, every baptism should be registered, the names of the god-parents being entered.

SUBURBAN MISERIES.

"MISERIES of a suburb indeed!" exclaims one who is interested in the question. "Then if you don't like our suburb, why not go and live somewhere else?"

And our friend goes on to show that there are still plenty of people who live in London itself, where there are streets, and squares, and rows of houses, still inhabited by civilised people; while here and there are stately piles of buildings, let out in residential flats, and mansions, chambers, "diggings" of every kind, where people may establish themselves in comfort, and within easy reach of the theatres, museums, law courts, and all the rest. And if these abodes are too heavily rented for your purse, there are other buildings of a less pretentious class and yet a good deal superior to the ordinary model lodging, where suites of unfurnished rooms may be had at a moderate cost.

Indeed, there are signs of a certain reflux of population towards its centre, already in progress in London. You may pass along whole streets in the suburbs, once occupied by a prosperous middle-class community, people with smart housemaids, fine white steps, and brightly-polished door-fittings; but now with dismal rows of boards "to let" projecting on either hand, with once trim grass plots all tattered and unkempt, and the neatly trained creepers hanging dishevelled from the walls. A house here and there will be found occupied by a swarm of new tenants. A cheap tailor has set up his shop in the neat breakfast parlour where once Brown might have been seen of a morning, his prosperous face illumined with reflections from the snowy damask and the brilliant electro-plate, while Mrs. Brown in a charming morning wrapper presided over the cosy breakfast equipage. Through the upper windows the sight of strings hung with many-shaped white garments suggests that a laundress has taken possession of the rooms once made elegant by Mrs.

Brown's velvet painting and knickknacks; dozens of ragged children hang about the doorsteps, down which the little Browns used to trip, all neat and smart, with governess or nursemaid in attendance.

The same thing is going on in other directions; streets become depopulated; and yet here are other streets newly risen from their foundations, which seem to be tolerably well off for inhabitants. In fact, two sets of forces may be traced at work; one which drives people further afield and into hitherto unsettled regions, and another attracting them to the centres of business or pleasure.

But, admitting the advantages of a residential flat or chambers near the centre of the town, yet the tastes of the average Briton lead him to desire some kind of a hovel altogether to himself—his own little compound, sheltered by his own particular fig-tree and a vine which, if it never succeeds in ripening its grapes, spreads itself refreshingly out in leaves. Thus, though sometimes he grumbles, and sometimes rails at his suburb, he goes on living there. The evening air is cool and pleasant after the exhausted super-heated atmosphere of the streets; and the morning sun, glistening upon the dew-covered lawn and glinting on the gay flower-beds, gives zest to the early pipe and the matutinal reflections. And to the reasonable man, the ordinary noises of the street are not disquieting. The melancholy resonance of the cries of the street-traders, the clink of cans, the sharp fusillade of the postman's knock are no more thought of than the murmur of the distant sea by dwellers on the coast. But the quiet suburb attracts a host of irregular practitioners, who force themselves upon your notice and disturb all your most serious labours.

There are beggars and tramps in considerable numbers, who penetrate to the lower regions, and who persist in appealing to Cæsar from the mandates of cook or housemaid. Give them food, and they wrap it up carefully in an old newspaper and deposit it on your neighbour's doorstep; relieve them with money, and they come back ere long for more, bringing with them other beggars more objectionable than themselves. Another set of people follow them, as pertinacious, although their object is more laudable. They desire an innocent kind of barter—to relieve you of your old clothes, and give you in exchange some of the glittering contents of their baskets.

Time was when the Jew old-clothesman was a familiar object in the quiet street, and his low nasal croak one of its ordinary sounds. But the many-hatted Hebrew, the painstaking, long-suffering Jew, is no longer to be seen; anyhow, no longer in our suburb. He may linger still about club houses and in aristocratic quarters, where gentlemen's gentlemen have extensive wardrobes to dispose of; but humble quarters know him no longer. Keen as he might be at a bargain, he always paid in hard coin; while the modern practitioner tries to tempt you with vases of extraordinary shapes and colours, or with pots of flowers in gorgeous bloom.

The flower-sellers, again, with their barrows loaded with really splendid displays—all a-growing and a-blowing—generally noisy and pertinacious, they have no sense of moderation, and, if you buy half-a-dozen pots from their stock, persist in trying to sell the whole show; yet they have an attractive side—harbingers of summer and all that summer brings. But what shall we say to these other dismal spectacles showing duskily through the dull fog of that depressing afternoon when winter first comes upon us—those dreadful working men in gangs who have “got no work to do?” Would they, could they, ever do a day's work among them?—these wretched, miserable scarecrows, who may be London builders, Lancashire weavers, Yorkshire iron puddlers, according to the circumstances of the hour. But they give one a shiver as they cast wolfish eyes at the evidences of modest comfort and well-being in our quiet suburbs. And how many of these roving bands do we see, and how few policemen! Verily, to some of the maiden ladies dwelling in our street, the short winter days come charged with fears and misgivings.

Less formidable than these, but more heart-piercing, are the ballad or hymn singers. There are more of the latter than the former, drawing forth in their miserable cracked voices sacred songs of the brightest and most glowing character, while a row of starving children join in dismal chorus. These last are probably hired from some “entrepreneur” of starving children; but does not the suspicion even heighten the miserable impression caused by the group?

Like an angel of light, in comparison with these, is the organ grinder, with his box full of cheerful airs. When he comes at the right time, the black-faced little

Italian is not a bad fellow ; and sometimes on a spring morning, say with sunshine in the air, and the first glimpse of the coming verdure, the lilt of some brave old tune makes the heart skip for joy. But, alas ! he generally comes at the wrong time, when somebody is ill, or you are in the throes of writing a pressing article, or are trying a new song, or mastering an abstruse problem. And then there are those terrible machines on wheels that sit down before the house, like a battery of artillery. A high-coloured "contadina" from Whitechapel accompanies the cortège, and the "bambino" is slung in a cradle between the handles of the vehicle ; a turn of the winch, and the overture explodes with a crash that makes the windows rattle, and sets all the dogs in the street a-barking.

Those dogs again—they may be called a self-inflicted misery. Our Towler plays his part in the chorus with as much vigour as any of the rest. But there are certainly an unconscionable number of dogs in our street. When Towler takes his walks abroad, there is a violent disturbance everywhere ; colliers put their heads out of upper windows, Saint Bernards bay from the basement, little fox terriers fly viciously at garden wickets, and wizened-looking pugs pant and snarl from every grassy lawn. And there are fights ! The dogs of the streets, indeed, have pretty well tested each other's powers, and avoid unequal combats. But sometimes a strange Towler comes into the street, and then there are difficulties. Every kind of business must be thrown aside, to rush and separate the combatants.

We have German bands, too. The old Major who lives next door but one encourages the villains. At seven o'clock on quiet evenings, when the Major sits down to dinner, he is delighted to hear the opening bars of the march from *Le Prophète*, and crash ! the whole brass, and string, and parchment rush in. The Major is delighted, for he fancies himself at mess once more, and with his old regiment ; but there are others, his neighbours, who have no half-pay to fall back upon, and who inwardly revile the whole performance as they lay their tasks hopelessly aside.

Then there are our neighbours' dear boys—ill-regulated youths, who have got the upper hand over their fond parents, and who perform the part of Mohawks in our gentle neighbourhood : knocking, ringing, and running away on dark nights ; upsetting milk-cans ; and generally doing

everything which they ought not. In winter, they make long slides upon the pavement, in defiance of all municipal laws, and cause unhappy pedestrians to have unpleasant encounters with the pavement.

And although we are mostly quiet, humdrum people in our street, yet we have our raffish spirits. There is a genteel widow over the way, who takes in boarders, and, for a genteel widow, her taste in boarders is something loud. At night—when the quiet members of the community are in bed, unless, perchance, some midnight lamp casts the shadow of an arduous student on the blind—there begins a rattle and a roar of cabs, as one after another of our genteel widow's boarders come dashing home. Then rise voices, shouts, laughter, or noisy disputes with cabmen, or a loud-voiced discussion among friends, all of whom have lost the thread of their argument.

But these are not the only noises of the night. As other sounds die away, hark to the roar and whirl of trains that are threading in and out among the iron ways ; luggage trains noisily hooting, getting up steam, banging huge wooden trucks against each other ; or, sometimes we have all round the dull reports of fog signals—"past two and a foggy morning," the old watchman would have called. And Towler growls ! Is there a burglar lurking in the yard ? Perhaps the man has a revolver, and Towler will pay for his fidelity with his life ; perhaps he has not, and then it will be bad for the man ! Anyhow, there will be trouble. Alas ! after all the miseries of the day, does night even fail to bring repose ?

A CYMRIC COURTSHIP.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS. PART I.

ALL through the six work-days of the week the good folk of the parish of Llan-sawyl, in the county of Carmarthen, were dispersed and scattered far and wide in their lonely farms, cottages, and cabins, among the soft-alooping, grassy Welsh hills.

If you wanted to see a full muster from the remote ends of the largest and most straggling parish in South Wales, the best opportunity would be to go on a Sunday afternoon to hear a sermon by the Reverend David Davies, Minister of the Independent Chapel which stood under the shelter of a wooded slope

on the high road to Llandovery. There regularly, Sunday after Sunday, nine-tenths of the population of Llansawyl and its dependent hamlets ranged themselves in rows on the high-backed benches, their bright eyes and strongly marked Celtic faces lit up by admiration of their old Minister's fervid eloquence in praying and preaching, an eloquence and power which had stood the strain of a forty years' ministry at Llansawyl; indeed, where any man could find such an inexhaustible supply of deep thoughts, and how he could always clothe them in such telling language, was a mystery to all his flock, including that personage whose knowledge was held to be all-embracing—John Morgan, the schoolmaster.

John Morgan himself was a conspicuous person in the chapel, being the leading spirit in a band of energetic vocalists, who sat in a gallery behind the pulpit, and undertook to pilot the congregational fervour through the mazes of florid psalmody so dear to the Welsh rustic mind. John Morgan had an excellent baritone voice, but that was only the secondary reason why he took his place among the chapel singers. The primary reason was that Mary of Ynysau was also a singer, and that it was part of John's long courtship to escort her to and from chapel; to sit close behind her; and to give her the first-fruits of his attention and devotion during the prayers and discourses of the Reverend David Davies. Sunday afternoon in chapel, and the evenings for choir practice, were John's landmarks in an otherwise rather irksome existence; and he ventured to believe that his queen of hearts also looked forward to these periodical meetings, and calculated on the chance ones which might fall in between them, with almost as much pleasure as he did himself.

Mary's real name was Mary Rees, but, as there were at least half-a-dozen other Mary Reeses within a radius of a mile, it was customary to avoid confusion by styling each after her home, or her father's Christian name.

Following out this principle, I have even heard of a man who was distinguished by the addition of his wife's name to his own, Sally-John—which was one way of saying who held the reins of government in the establishment.

Mary of Ynysau was a good specimen of a thorough-bred Welshwoman. She had clear-cut, resolute features, supple limbs, finely developed by plenty of muscular

exertion, a grand mass of black hair, drawn back from a bright, honest face which had been browned and reddened by summer heat and winter cold.

An English farmer's daughter, particularly if she had the cosy fortune that Mary had, would have considered Mary's dress extremely dowdy. She wore, for high days and holidays, a petticoat of homespun linsey, an ample check apron, a black cloth jacket, and a tall beaver hat. Her everyday apparel would be more difficult to describe; for when a girl, however good-looking, spends a couple of hours every day in the cow-house, and a considerable slice of her time in agricultural pursuits, she must adapt her garments to the exigencies of her occupation; and the becoming is lost sight of in the importance of the practical.

However, whatever Mary's appearance may have been to impartial eyes, John Morgan was never tired of declaring that she was not only the best, but also the best-looking, bar none, of all the girls between Llanwrda and Llandovery. This, it is true, was a limited statement, but it included the whole of John's horizon, and was as comprehensive a one as he could make.

Yet, despite his attachment, his wooing had not made any great advance during the three or four years it had been in doing. The first time, now long ago, that he had tried to say something to her about a bidding and a wedding-ring, she had put him off with the excuse that she was over young to think of such things. Submissively he granted that she was right, but felt that the force of such reasoning must yield to Time, the inexorable. Yet when she was turned three-and-twenty, and when no one would have called her too young, she still found substantial reasons for stopping John directly he began to talk on the subject nearest to his heart. Nevertheless, a certain instinct told him that patience and courage would bring their due reward; and he was fully persuaded that Mary of Ynysau, with her clever ways, and her few hundred pounds, would make a wife well worth waiting for.

This was how their courtship stood one October Sunday afternoon, when they walked to chapel together as usual and took their places in the singers' gallery. The sun was shining broadly and benignly over the hills on which the bracken was turning yellow, and the heather brown. The narrow valleys were filled with a soft haze, and the mellowness of autumn spread

richly away into an almost imperceptible distance. It was a strong proof of the high esteem in which the Reverend David Davies was held, that none of his listeners were tempted to forsake him by the bewildering glory of this Saint Luke's summer day.

The congregation was nearly all assembled when the Minister's wife came in and took her seat, followed by a stranger, a girl of about eighteen. An unfamiliar face, by its very rarity, always attracted a good deal of attention in Llansawyl Chapel, and this particular stranger was still more remarkable by the contrast she made with all the other girls present. She was as elegant and natty in costume, as self-assured and graceful in carriage and pose as the smart lady's maid at Dolangleisio; but in features the waiting woman could not be compared to the girl who upset the equilibrium of public curiosity that afternoon, and who had bright golden hair which waved crisply round a well-shaped forehead; clear bright brown eyes, shaded by long dark lashes; a well-formed nose; and the daintiest, most wilful little mouth and chin that can be imagined. She was not tall, but her figure was so gracefully proportioned that it gave her the dignity of height. She would have been noticeable anywhere, but among the uncultivated faces and angular figures around her, she looked like a delicate rosebud among thistles.

"It's Master Davies's granddaughter," whispered Margaret of Cwmgoggerddan, in a stage "aside" to her neighbour. "There was a daughter who went to London to get her living, and she married a London body. They both died, and the girl has been with her father's people till now."

Margaret of Cwmgoggerddan was a great authority; in public estimation she stood scarcely second to the Minister. She knew everyone's history and business, no detail of which escaped her observation, or faded from her memory, and her reputation as a book of reference was further heightened by a rumour that she had ways and means of finding out anything that she chose to discover. In fact, had she lived two hundred years previously, she would inevitably have been ducked in one of the still brown pools of the Gleision, and if she had escaped drowning, would have been burnt for her supernatural command over the elements. In the tolerant nineteenth century she was regarded with awe, and consulted on all important occasions by most of her neighbours.

Margaret's epitome of the stranger's history, as it spread quickly from ear to ear, did not lessen the interest with which she was observed. The interest, however, was not reciprocal. The Minister's granddaughter had taken a slow look round the bare chapel, up to its damp-stained ceiling, and down to its unevenly-paved floor. She had included all the people present in this sweeping survey, and then settled herself in her pew, with the conviction—plainly visible in the expression of her curved lips and the shrug of her shapely shoulders—that she was the victim of a public fraud, and that there was no one in the place worth a second look.

When at the beginning of the first hymn a volume of vocalism poured down from the gallery, the girl lifted a careless look towards the singers, which, passing from one to another of them, finally met the eyes of John, the schoolmaster.

John was not a young man whose emotions were easily aroused; his courtship, with its jog-trot ups and downs, had never worked him into a fever of hope or despair. His nearest acquaintance with passion was a kind of satisfactory thrill which stirred his heart when he stole a kiss from Mary, or walked in the twilight with her hand in his.

So when, with the coolness of one who considers his affections at anchor, he allowed his blue-grey eyes to meet for a moment the supercilious scrutiny of those ruddy brown ones, the strange shudder which ran through his veins was followed by a feeling of great surprise. He stopped singing to wonder what those eyes had silently said to set the inmost fibre of his being quivering; and, when his neighbour accompanied a high note with a nudge, by way of reminder that the schoolmaster had deserted his post at a critical moment, he blushed violently and lowered his eyes hastily. But he sang all the rest of that hymn at random, because of an almost irresistible impulse to ascertain if the brown eyes were still looking at him, and because of an inexplicable bashfulness which forbade him to raise his bent head. During the prayer which followed the hymn, he did venture to steal a glance, between his fingers towards the graceful figure below, but in his hurry and confusion he saw nothing.

At last the service was over, and the worshippers streamed out into the last level rays of sunshine, with a comfortable sensation of having fulfilled their obliga-

tions to religion for the ensuing week ; and as they dropped off into groups and couples for the homeward way, the old Minister hurried after Mary and her faithful swain.

"Well, Mary !"

"Well, Master Davies !" was the greeting that passed in the approved fashion of Carmarthenshire.

"I've brought my granddaughter, Eleanor Carroll," went on the Minister, "to make her known to you. She came down from London yesterday."

Mary was a prime favourite with the Minister. So she was not surprised at the distinction ; but she was overwhelmed by the air of fashion and superiority of the Minister's granddaughter. She held out her hand shyly. "How do you do ?" she said in Welsh.

Eleanor took her hand.

"I can't understand you if you talk Welsh," she said with a touch of petulance.

"Ah !" said Mary, her strong accent and hesitation showing how unused she was to speaking anything but Welsh ; "you will be used to speak Sassonaeg. It is John Morgan here, who can speak better than anyone, except the parson of the church," and she glanced with some pride towards her accomplished friend.

A look of embarrassment had clouded John's face as he saw himself thus brought into close quarters with those fascinating eyes. He, too, held out his hand, almost fearing to feel the dainty glove in his broad palm.

"Do you mean that everyone cannot speak English about here ?" asked Eleanor, looking from one to another as if she were being personally injured.

"Indeed, no," replied John. "There are old people here, who only know a few words of Sassonaeg—I mean English—and even in the schools the children have Welsh books."

"Goodness gracious !" cried the young lady ; "what a dreadful state of things. How can people get on without English ?"

"They do not want it much," replied John, feeling terribly humbled by this supercilious treatment of the matter. "All people here speak Welsh alike ; even Sir Evan Gwynne, at Dolangleision, and the other gentlemen and ladies. Welsh is our language, and it is a good language too."

"It doesn't seem to me like a language at all," she replied with a fine disregard of her listener's feelings.

Mary's patriotism was up in arms.

"Nay," she said, "if you only understood it, you would call it a good language too."

"I never shall understand it," replied Eleanor indifferently.

"Then how will you understand the preaching ? The preaching is very fine, and it is always in Welsh."

"And is it always as long as it was to-day ?" she rejoined irrelevantly. "We were in chapel nearly two hours. Even if I understood, I could not listen so long as that."

She was taking her revenge for the dreariness of those two hours. Of her three companions—one felt distressed, the second angry, and the third amazed.

"My child !" began her grandfather in a deprecating tone.

She smiled at him in a way which seemed to John bewitching, and to Mary insincere.

"She doesn't mean all she says, Mary," went on the old man. "She's like her mother was—a saucy little puss."

Saucy pusses, in fashionable attire, were quite out of Mary's orbit of sympathy. She heartily wished that Master Davies had not made an appeal to her for a welcome to his granddaughter.

"Will you come up to Ynysau, Master Davies ?" she felt bound to say.

She said it with a half glance at John. She knew that such an intrusion on their tête-à-têtes was not at all pleasant to him. Perhaps if he looked as if he were disappointed, Master Davies would say "no"—for he was a kind old man. But there was no sign of a ruffle on John's face ; on the contrary, he added his persuasions to Mary's invitation.

"Don'tee say 'no,' Master Davies. Your granddaughter is strange here, and perhaps she's not best pleased at feeling herself a stranger. The sooner she makes friends the sooner she'll feel settled."

"Very true ! very true !" said the old preacher. "She must try and feel settled. She has come to live with us ; haven't you, Nell ? And you mustn't feel strange among us."

Her answer was another smile, which fell more to John's share than to her grandfather's.

"It is all very fine to talk about feeling settled, as if one could settle anywhere, without considering what one is used to," she said to the schoolmaster, as she dropped behind with him, while Mary and Master Davies walked on in front. "Suppose he."

with a gesture towards her grandfather, "were taken up to London and told to settle there, how do you think he would like it?"

"You speak so quick," was John's answer, "and your English is so different from ours, that I cannot make out all you say."

Miss Eleanor repeated herself with great deliberation and emphasis.

"I cannot say," replied John, slowly. "I do not know how London would suit Master Davies. I have never been there, and I do not know what it is like."

"Never been in London!" she exclaimed, lifting her hands; "ah, well, I can quite believe it to look at you—but it sounds so funny. Shouldn't you like to go?"

"I do not know," replied John doubtfully. "It's very far; but I should like to hear you tell of your life there."

Mary and the Minister were far on ahead now, up the hilly field-path which led from the high road to Ynysau; and while John helped his companion over the many difficulties presented by its steepness, or the occasional brooklets which took their way unceremoniously across it, he did his best to follow the stream of description and reminiscence which she poured forth. If Eleanor was gaining a totally new experience in the capabilities and impossibilities of life, undoubtedly so was the schoolmaster; and while to her each new revelation was more or less of a disappointment or a shock, to him his discoveries brought a bewildering sense of pleasure.

Before they had reached the long, low, whitewashed farm at the top of the hill, the schoolmaster had grown accustomed to the rapid flow of an unfamiliar language; he had grown bold enough to enjoy the glances shot at him every now and then; and he had risen superior to a former prejudice that a well-grown girl ought to be able to jump over a watercourse.

"You've been a long time coming up the hill," said Mary as they entered the house.

"Oh," cried Eleanor, "the road was so dreadful. I am torn in a dozen places. My shoes are soaked and ruined. I have not a gasp of breath left."

"Nay, nay," said John, with a familiarity which struck Mary as having been achieved very quickly. "It wasn't the climbing, it was the talking that has taken your breath away. She has been telling me all about London. It must be a fine place."

"It is well that John Morgan speaks English so well," said Mary; yet in her

heart she felt a little sorry that the schoolmaster was in a position to make unlimited conversation for this petulant dainty girl who despised Wales.

"I was afraid, John," she said afterwards, when she and he were about to say good-night by the light of a crescent moon, "I was afraid you would be vexed when I asked the Minister here this afternoon."

"Why?" asked John, who, instead of making his usual advantage of this opportunity for lover-like demonstrations, was leaning against the gate, puffing absently at his pipe; "why should I have been vexed, if you chose to ask them?"

"Well, you remember you were vexed one Sunday, not so long ago, when Sally of Cefn Teilych came along with us."

"Was I? But then you see, Sally is always on the grumble about her rheumatics and what not—she always makes me cross. She and the Minister don't count together."

"You said then," said Mary, drawing a step nearer, "that you liked having Sundays all to ourselves, just you and me."

It was not often she made advances to him. If she had spoken thus and come up close to him last Sunday, John would have felt that his long suspense was nearly over. But now he made no reply. He went on puffing at his pipe as if he meant to lean against the gate till he had finished it.

"Good-night, John," said Mary at last, breaking a silence which wounded her more than she could have expressed.

"You're in a mighty hurry, Molly."

"No, I'm not; but it's getting late, and you seem to have nothing more to say."

"Well, good-night," he answered, "don't take it amiss I'm quiet. I was thinking of all the Minister's Eleanor was talking of this afternoon." He might have added that he was thinking also of the Minister's Eleanor's eyes, and wondering how they managed to look into his, as Mary's had never done.

"For my part," said Mary, as she went back to the house, "I should not care if the Minister's Eleanor had stayed in London town all her life and never come here with her smart clothes and silly ways."

Poor Mary! She, too, had gained an experience that day.

The quiet, sparsely peopled hill-country, to which the chances and changes of life had brought Eleanor Carroll, is beautiful enough to satisfy the most exacting lover

of Nature ; but Eleanor was not a lover of Nature. She found the placid monotony of her grandfather's house irksome to a degree, and the solitude of the broad simple land unspeakably dreary. When she had unpacked all her pretty dresses, and furbished up all the millinery which had suffered on the journey ; when she had metamorphosed her tiny whitewashed bedroom, and worked a revolution in the little sitting-room below ; she began to wonder how she should endure the daily routine which lay before her, and what would take the place of the thousand and one distractions and excitements she had left behind her.

There was nothing, absolutely nothing, to compensate for the crowded streets and gay shop windows, the theatres, the music, the continual variety. There was not a creature to replace her dozens of friends of both sexes, who all talked the same slang, all affected the same views of life, all moved in the same orbit. It was all very well for her grandparents to talk to her of making a companion of Mary of Ynysau. Mary could not even talk English fluently, and had not begun the acquaintance by looking as if she wished to make herself agreeable.

The schoolmaster was in a position to understand and to be understood ; and he had gone so far as to venture on a little flattery ; and though he was a mere clown with so limited a notion of manners, that he had not even raised his hat when he was introduced to her, he was a far more attractive personage than Bob Rees from the mill, or than another uncanny lout (also named Rees, of course,) both of whom she had seen since her first appearance at the chapel. Yes, the schoolmaster, though she could not quite overlook his tendency to drift into that most hateful of languages, Welsh, was so far better than these, that she began to wish that it would occur to him to come and talk to her a little in the evenings, while her grandfather sat studying his big Welsh bible, and her grandmother knitted and nodded in the big armchair. She sounded the old lady on the frequency of his visits to them.

"He comes now and again, my girl," Mrs. Davies said, "but not very often. You see he has a good bit to do : he farms a bit for his mother in between whiles with his schoolmastering, and then he's courting Mary of Ynysau ; so he's pretty well took up."

"I wish he would come sometimes,"

returned the girl querulously ; "because he speaks and understands English better than anyone here."

"Not better than your grandfer !"

"Oh ! well, that doesn't count."

Mrs. Davies did not agree with this valuation of the Minister ; but she held her peace, and had almost forgotten the conversation, when, the next evening, John Morgan knocked at the door, and enquired if the Minister were at home.

John Morgan and Mary of Ynysau had not met since their unsatisfactory parting the Sunday before, and an uncomfortable reminiscence still haunted them both. This evening John might have gone to Ynysau ; he had, in fact, spent the morning and part of the afternoon in the intention of so doing ; but, when school was over, just as he was leaving the school house the Minister's granddaughter in her dainty costume had passed, had stopped and talked to him for a quarter-of-an-hour about the dulness of her lot, and had finished her remarks by saying : "I suppose you are too busy to ever spare a half-hour to come and cheer a body up a bit." The result of which was that, after milking his mother's cows, John made a far more careful toilet than ever he made to go to Ynysau, and instead of taking the uphill path which led to Mary's home, he followed the Llandovery road a little further, knocked at the Minister's door, and was ushered by Mrs. Davies into the Minister's parlour, into the presence of Eleanor.

The room was a good deal changed since she had come to make one of the household. She had hung smart knick-knacks on the walls, and tied bows of ribbon to the old-fashioned furniture. There was a huge red spider clinging to the faded window-curtains, and a miniature lobster was engaged at acrobatic feats on the side table-cloth. These novelties, Eleanor explained to John when he remarked on them, "were elegant and fashionable ornaments, without which life would be quite too dreary. The old people," she said, "looked on them as confusing, but that was only a sign of their rusticity." To John they were wonderful evidences of the reality of that world of gimcracks which had dazzled his mind on Sunday, and of which he was ready to hear more ; though all the while his patriotic soul was swelling with a desire to assert the virtues of Wales, and to show to these beautiful brown eyes some-

thing which would raise Carmarthenshire in their owner's estimation.

"And will there be real caves in London as well as the mock ones in the theatre?" he asked after a long description of the pantomime of the "Forty Thieves."

"Real caves in London!" repeated Eleanor derisively. "Where do you think there would be room for them in a place like London?"

"Well," replied the schoolmaster, humbly, "if the caves were there, there they'd be; and room would be for them."

"But if you're a schoolmaster, you ought to know that there aren't any caves there."

"Then," he cried, and his face brightened—"then you've never been in a cave!"

"I didn't say so," she replied loftily, as if feeling that her omniscience was about to receive a snub. "I may have been to other places where there are caves."

"Ah," said John, rebuked; "but then, have you? Because, I was going to say, we have caves here, and they might be new to you, and might amuse you for an afternoon."

"Have you really?" replied Eleanor, condescendingly. "I think I should rather like to see them. A girl I knew once went to a place where there were caves. She told me about them; but I forget where it was. She said they were quite dark; and that it was great fun."

"There are dark, too; only we carry candles when we go. They are not like other caves, for it is said that they were once gold mines; that is long ago, when the Romans were masters of the land. Antiquaries have proved that the long galleries were hewn out by the Roman legions, and——"

"Oh, I say!" cried Eleanor; "stop that learned twaddle. What do I want to know about the Romans?"

"I was finished about the Romans," returned John, with Cymric persistency. "I was going to tell you that geologists can trace gold-bearing quartz——"

"I won't listen!" cried Eleanor again, putting her hands over her ears. "I hate being stuffed with school-book sentences. But I do want to go to the caves; and, if you will promise not to be prosy, you may take me, and we will carry candles, and all the rest of it."

"Will you really come?" cried John. "Will you come on Saturday, when there is no school? They are in the hill by Dolangleision; and we can go along a little

way and see the big house where Sir Evan lives."

"Thank you, John Morgan," said the Minister, looking up from his bible. "You are very kind to plan pleasure for the lass. And we'll ask Mary of Ynysau, for I want her to be my lass's friend."

So it was all fixed; and John had to spend another evening at the Minister's in order to settle the hour of the start, and the order of going.

But when Mary heard of the arrangement, she did not feel at all enthusiastic to make one of the party.

"The Minister's Eleanor will not care for the caves, John," she said. "I am sure she will be afraid of messing her fine clothes with damp and dirt."

"Nay, Mary, you are altogether mistaken about her," cried John, on the defensive at once. "I daresay her clothes are smarter than yours or the other girls', but she comes from a place where smart clothes are quite general, and she thinks no more of them than you do of your own."

"I doubt that," returned Mary decisively; "she looks to me just such another as that giddy-headed maid Miss Gwynne brought here four years back; and you didn't call her a sensible girl, though you do stick up for the Minister's Eleanor."

"I see," said John, "you've made up your mind against her."

"I made up my mind against her! Why, I've hardly spoken ten words to her! Why should I be set against her?"

"Goodness only knows; perhaps because you are a woman."

"That's stupid, and——"

"It is very stupid," retorted John warmly. Then there was a disagreeable silence, on account of a great lump in Mary's throat, which checked her next retort. It was John who broke the pause. "Now don't 'ee go and sulk, there's a good lass," he said with the superior tone of one who has had the best of a discussion. "We mustn't squabble over such a trifle as that. Why, the caves, and the Minister's Eleanor, and the Minister's Eleanor's fine frocks, all put together, ain't worth a squabble betwixt you and me."

As a rule, Mary had hitherto tossed her head at such little protestations of esteem from the schoolmaster; but this one was too sweet and too opportune to be flouted. She held out her hand and looked kindly into his blue eyes, and he returned her look, and thought, as he clasped her rough,

toil-stained fingers, how slim and white was the hand which had tied the fanciful bows on the Minister's chair and curtains.

"Then you won't say 'no' about the Dolangleision Caves to-morrow, Mary," he said.

"No, of course I won't, John," she replied with unusual tenderness, and for a moment she forgot the ground of her objection.

HISTORICAL GOSSIP.

EARLY in the present century, the most detested man by lovers of freedom in England and elsewhere was Lord Castlereagh. The Tory Minister for Foreign Affairs in the days of the Holy Alliance was supposed to be the determined enemy of liberty throughout the world; a man of harsh and cruel purposes, ruthless in carrying them out.

When the unfortunate Statesman died by his own hand, many must have been surprised at the evidence given by his body servant at the inquest. "Had he any reason to suppose that His Lordship's mind had been deranged of late?" "Well, his lordship had been a little strange of late." "For instance?" "Well, he spoke harshly to me a day or two before his death." We must agree that this last answer shows Lord Castlereagh in a very different light to that commonly accepted as correct.

"England expects every man to do his duty," is asserted to be as apocryphal as "Up, Guards, and at 'em!" The story goes that the last signal Nelson gave, was really: "Nelson expects every man to do his duty," and that the officer to whom the order was given affected to have misunderstood his directions, and substituted and telegraphed "England" for "Nelson." Southey says that the signal was received by the fleet with enthusiasm; but Southey was not there, and one who has recorded the equally, if not more, probable fact, that some hard-headed tars could not understand what the signal really meant. "Do our duty!" quoth one of them, "why, in course we shall." And, in truth, the exhortation, however worded, was not one required by British sailors, soldiers, or marines; they always do their duty. Apropos of Nelson, that great man had a temper.

Towards the close of the war with the First Republic, when the general distress was sharp, and bread far dearer than beef,

a curious fashion arose in London, of giving dinners, to which the guests were expected to bring their own bread. Nelson was favoured with an invitation to such a dinner, and, as his host omitted to inform him that he was expected to bring his bread with him, Nelson went unsupplied. Possibly, being just home from sea, the Admiral was unaware of the custom. At all events, when he found that there was no bread, he made quite a little scene, called his servant, and, before the whole company, gave him a shilling, and ordered him to go out and buy a roll, saying aloud: "It is hard that after fighting my country's battles, I should be grudging her bread." One would not like to have been present at that dinner party, still less to have been the host.

Royal personages do not always shine as orators. Saint Simon tells us a good story illustrative of this. "Under the Regency of the Duke of Orleans, the Duc de Berri was introduced to the Parliament of Paris. The First President made His Highness a complimentary harangue, and it was then the Prince's turn to reply. He half took off his hat by way of salute to the Assembly, immediately replaced it, and looked hard at the First President. 'Monsieur,' he began, then gazed blankly around, and began again: 'Monsieur;' then turned appealingly round to the Duke of Orleans for help. The cheeks of the Regent, like those of his cousin, were as red as fire, and he was wholly unable to help the luckless Prince out of his scrape. 'Monsieur,' now dolefully recommenced the Duc de Berri, and again stopped short. 'I saw the confusion of the Prince,' says Saint Simon, 'I trembled, but there was no help for it.' Again, the Prince looked at the Duke of Orleans, and the Duke of Orleans appeared to be intently studying the make and shape of his own boots. At length the First President put an end to the painful scene with as much tact as he could well display. He took off his judge's bonnet with a low bow to the Duc de Berri, as if in acknowledgement of the Prince's unspoken oration, and then opened the business of the session, to the intense relief of all present. On quitting the Parliament House, the Duke paid a visit to the Duchess of Ventadour, where he was complimented on his speech by the Princess of Montauban, who knew nothing of what had happened, and thus ventured on what she naturally supposed to be a safe piece of flattery. The Duke,

now wild with annoyance, hurried away as soon as he could to the Duchess of Saint Simon's. Once alone with that great-hearted lady, and sure of sympathy, the poor fellow threw himself into an arm-chair and burst into tears. Madame de Saint Simon did her best to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and showed, as must be allowed, a touching sense of his own degradation. He bitterly blamed the King and the Duke of Beauvilliers for the wretched education he had received. 'They never thought,' he bitterly exclaimed, 'but to brutalise me; they taught me nothing but to play and hunt, and they have succeeded in making of me a fool and a brute utterly incapable, never to be fit for anything, always to be the laughing-stock and the scorn of mankind.'

A story is told of our William the Third which lacks those very important essentials—time and place. He had sentenced an insubordinate Dutch regiment to be decimated. The soldiers accordingly drew lots, every tenth man, of course, drawing his death warrant. Not unnaturally, one of the drawers of the fatal piece desired to sell the lot he had drawn, if perchance he could find a buyer. One of his comrades at last volunteered to be shot in his place for a hundred pistoles, to be paid to his wife after his death. William, having been informed of this doleful bargain, sent for the soldier, and asked whether what he had been told was true. "Yes," replied the soldier; "I have run the risk of being killed for many years for next to nothing a day, and now that I can secure my wife and children something substantial, I am ready to die." William pardoned the man, and gave him the hundred pistoles.

When General Wolfe was appointed to the command of the expedition against Canada, Pitt invited him to dinner on the day preceding his embarkation. The only other guest was Lord Temple, Pitt's brother-in-law, who afterwards told the story to Thomas Grenville.

As the evening advanced, Wolfe, ever so slightly warmed with wine, or, it may be, merely fired by his own thoughts, broke forth into a loud strain of gasconade. He drew his sword; he rapped the table with it; he flourished it about round the room; he talked of the mighty things that sword was to achieve. The two Ministers stood aghast at an exhibition so unusual from any man of real sense and spirit; and when at last Wolfe had taken his leave, and his

carriage was heard to roll from the door, Pitt seemed for the moment shaken in the high opinion which he had formed of Wolfe; he lifted up his eyes and arms, and exclaimed to Lord Temple: "Good Heavens! that I should have entrusted the fate of the country and of the administration to such hands!"

It has been scandalously asserted of certain English Statesmen, that chance, and not opinion, caused them to take that side in politics in which they have won distinction.

A story is told of M. Berryer, which places him in the same category. When a very young man, with fame and fortune yet to win, Berryer is said to have considered the arguments for Atheism and Republicanism as being quite as good, on the whole, as those for Religion and Legitimism.

He felt, moreover, that for worldly success it was requisite that he should not continue all his life as a doubter, but have some sort of creed. Should he range himself on the side of Church and King, or for "the immortal principles of 1789?" After trying in vain to balance the considerations for and against either belief, he gave up the task in disgust, and decided the course of his life by tossing. He took a "louis d'or" from his pocket, tossed it up and said: "Heads, King; tails, Republic." Heads it was, and henceforth was Berryer a staunch Legitimist.

About as much real belief in religion had Malherbe. One day he gave a beggar some silver, and the grateful wretch assured Malherbe that he would pray for him. "Pray do not trouble yourself to do that, my friend," replied the poet; "judging from your own condition, I should hardly think you had much credit with Heaven."

Apocryphal of charity, it is related of Robert the Second of France, that one day a thief by the dexterous use of a knife, was cutting the gold fringe from the King's dress. "Stop, my friend," quoth Robert, "you have now half; leave the other half for someone else."

Louis the Fifteenth, the monarch whom the Duc de Berri so bitterly blamed, was extremely kind to his personal attendants; but when he was, so to say, in his official character of King, "aussitôt qu'il prenait son attitude de souverain," as Madame Campan puts it, his aspect would strike awe into the beholder; and persons who had seen him every day of their lives were apt to be as much intimidated as a young lady at her first appearance at Court.

Now it chanced that the members of the King's household claimed certain privileges, which were disputed them by the Corporation of the town of St. Germain's. Anxious to obtain the King's decision on the matter, the members of the household resolved to send a deputation to His Majesty to urge their claims. Bazire and Soulaigre, two of the King's valets, undertook to act as deputies, and obtained without difficulty an audience of the Sovereign. The next morning, after the early levee, Louis ordered the deputation to be introduced, and, at the same time, assumed his most imposing look. Bazire, who was to speak, was almost paralysed with fright, and his knees were loosened with terror. He just managed to stammer out the word "Sire." Having repeated this word two or three times, he was seized with a felicitous inspiration :

"Sire," he once more began, "here is Soulaigre."

Soulaigre, looking unutterably wretched, commenced in his turn :

"Sire — sire — sire," then (oh, happy thought !) ended like his colleague, "Sire, here is Bazire."

The King smiled and made answer :

"Gentlemen, I know the motive which has brought you here. I will see that your petition is granted, and I am very well satisfied with the manner in which you have fulfilled your mission as deputies."

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER VII. ILLUMINATIONS.

MRS. PERCIVAL generally had a tea-party on Sunday afternoon. People had a way of driving in from the country to the far-famed evening service at Woolsborough Cathedral, and River Gate was a very agreeable refuge on these occasions ; Canon Percival was always hospitable and gracious, his wife was always charming. Towards half-past six a large party used to stream across the Close from River Gate to the Cathedral, with a certainty of finding good places ; for the head verger, the greatest man in Woolsborough, was Mrs. Percival's slave.

On Vincent's last Sunday, only one

party of people came in to tea. They were entertained by the Canon, Mrs. Percival, and Celia, as pleasantly as usual ; but they were not interesting people, and they went away early, having brought some visitors of their own with them, to whom they wished to show the Cathedral.

"They wanted you to go with them, Uncle Tom," said Celia, looking up with some mischief in her eyes.

"They must excuse me, Celia," said the Canon. "I cannot act showman for ever, you see ; and these good people—you will agree with me that they are a little dull, and that half-an-hour of them is enough. Some of these excellent country clergy don't quite realise that the Canon of a Cathedral, and the Rector of a large town parish, has a good deal to occupy his time, without the self-imposed duty of giving lectures to ladies on architecture. Of course, if people are really intelligent, really artistic, it is a different thing ; they are worth a little sacrifice."

"Or really rich, really great, really worth cultivating in any way," an ill-natured person might have added ; but there was not one present, fortunately.

"No more tea, thank you, my dear," said the Canon. "I hope you are going to make a disturbance about this tea ; there is certainly something wrong in the flavour. Celia, you are looking brilliant. And where is poor Vincent ? I must have a talk with my son before I lose him."

"I think he escaped into the library," said Mrs. Percival.

"There I shall find him, probably," said the Canon, and he walked away. Not finding Vincent in the library, he did not search any further, but sat down in his favourite chair and fell peacefully asleep.

The aunt and niece, left together in the drawing-room, were silent for a minute or two. Each of them hardly knew whether she ought to be angry with the other ; both of them, being very sweet-tempered, were unwilling to find this necessary. Those good people from the country had arrived almost directly after Mrs. Percival met the two young people in the garden, so that there had been no time yet for any explanation.

"Paul ought to be in soon," said Mrs. Percival, having given her little dogs their bits of sugar and saucers of cream. "How about Paul, Celia ? Do you know that I have been very much startled to-day ?"

"I hope you have heard nothing about me to vex you, Aunt Flo," said Celia

meekly; her tone now was very different from what it had been in the morning.

"Most likely you know already what I have heard." Mrs. Percival went on talking, moving slowly about the room all the time, while Celia sat still with her hands folded, looking curiously grave and sweet. "Of course Vincent went out to you, after he had been talking to me. Yes, I know all about it, Celia; and I am only very, very sorry that Vincent was not told from the first. He said he ought to have been told, and he was quite right. If he had known from the beginning, this would not have come into his head at all—people don't set their hearts on impossibilities. I am very sorry for the whole affair, and only glad that—that it is impossible, in fact—for your uncle and I could never have consented."

"No; I told him so; of course I am not good enough," murmured Celia with a slight smile.

"You told him this and that," said Mrs. Percival; "but, unfortunately, you did not tell him the whole truth at once, which cost me a trying scene this afternoon. As to your not being good enough, my dear, there is no occasion to say foolish things. You know perfectly well what I mean. But why did not you tell Vincent of your engagement, yesterday?"

"I could not. I told him what ought to have been quite enough."

"Was he reasonable this afternoon? Not too angry, I mean?"

"Not too angry," Celia answered. "We are very good friends now."

"He has been rather spoilt," sighed his mother. "You have spoilt him a little this summer, Celia, like the rest of us."

"One couldn't help it."

"No, one couldn't help it. With all his naughty ways and his temper, there is something so splendid about Vincent. Still I am afraid, Celia—don't you think you might have been more careful?"

"I don't know, Aunt Flo. As you say, one does not trouble oneself much about things that are impossible. How could I ever guess that Vincent would take it into his head to care for a beggar-girl like me? I neither expected nor wished it. I could not have been stiff with him; and you would not have wished that. We have had a very jolly summer," she said, with something like a sigh, "and I don't think it is quite my fault if it has ended in a thunderstorm."

Mrs. Percival glanced at her niece across

the room. The Canon, as usual, had chosen a wrong moment for paying Celia a compliment on her brilliant looks. Celia was tired, worn, and pale; she had not recovered from her bad night; and the second scene with Vincent had been a good deal more exciting than the first. Mrs. Percival was capable enough of blindness when she did not wish to see; but no one, knowing Celia intimately, could look at her now without seeing that she had gone through some straining experience.

"I am sorry, Celia," Mrs. Percival began in a low voice.

"Not for me, I suppose!" said the girl lightly. "Here is Paul."

At the same moment Paul came into the room. Mrs. Percival was startled, for she had not heard his step. Celia went forward to meet him with her sweetest smile, poured out tea for him, asked him about his walk, made him altogether perfectly welcome.

Paul's face was radiant in this sunshine, of which he had not yet enjoyed much. This was a very different thing from arriving all alone, twenty-four hours before, with no Celia to receive him. Mrs. Percival's amiabilities had been no compensation, and her charming drawing-room had been a desert. Now it was Eden once more; and Paul drank his tea in grateful peace. It did not occur to him to find fault with the flavour.

Mrs. Percival walked out on the terrace for a few minutes, leaving Celia and Paul together. She was half conscious of being a little angry with Celia, whose last words to her, "Not for me, I suppose!" had in them, somehow, something of the nature of a slap.

All very fine: but had not Celia herself confessed, long ago, that she was not in love with Paul? Of course she was not; anyone could see that. Paul would see it himself, if he was not ignorant and blind. Supposing that their worldly advantages were equal, who could compare the two men, Vincent and Paul? One was a dear, nice, clever boy; the other, when he chose, was a singularly attractive man. Of course, he could not have married Celia; and if he had been rich, he would never have thought of it. But Mrs. Percival felt in her heart that Celia was very much to be pitied, and refused to believe that Vincent's offer had roused no regret in her at all.

It was the old story of sour grapes; but Celia was indeed foolish if she thought any amount of clever acting would deceive her.

Mrs. Percival had not the smallest wish to alter the course of things; and perhaps she knew in her heart that she was a goose; but that Celia should bring forward a touch of pride, and pretend to be a little contemptuous, instead of flattered, at her conquest of Vincent — this was intolerable, and not to be endured. Neither could the sincerity of such feelings be for one moment believed in. Mrs. Percival carried with her, from that time, a secret conviction of Celia's deep disappointment. In truth, one must suppose she never really forgave Celia for attracting her son, or for pretending not to value the impossible prize that was offered to her.

In the drawing-room, Paul was giving Celia a history of his walk, the ancient church, the modern sermon, his French friend so strangely met, and the interesting talk they had had together. It was impossible to find fault with the way that Celia listened, and her remarks were just what they ought to be. It was not till long afterwards that Paul realised how little he or his doings had ever been to her. She smiled with interest and amusement as she looked at the Frenchman's card, which he pulled out of his pocket.

"But how magnificent!" she said. "Really, it was quite a romantic adventure. I hear the Lefroys often have all sorts of foreigners staying with them. Most people think them dreadful. I am not sure that I don't, Paul, if you will forgive me; you know I am a thorough Englishwoman."

"You wouldn't think my man dreadful," said Paul. "I wish you could see him. But there is something else I want to tell you. As I came home just now, I saw an illumination."

"Really?" said Celia. "Yes, how delightful!"

At that moment she was listening to something beyond Paul, and she looked up quickly at the window. She had heard a step that snatched her thoughts away—Vincent's step; he had joined his mother on the terrace, and they were now strolling up and down together. It seemed as if Vincent had forgiven his mother her sins against him, considering the parting that was so very near.

"It was a regular illumination," Paul went on; her goodness made him so happy that he did not notice the sudden distraction. "I wished you were there. I was coming down the hill towards the bridge, you know—trees in front, and then the

river, and then all Woolborough on the other bank, stretched along and sloping up in that pretty way it does, with the Cathedral in the middle of it. Everything perfectly clear, and all the houses the deepest red. The sun was right behind me, shining across, don't you see! And the west windows of the Cathedral and all the houses along the river were lit up with a perfect glory of light; they shone gold, dazzling, especially the Cathedral. I'll tell *you*," said Paul, a little oddly and wistfully, for he was not fond of making his fancies the property of others—"it was just as if angels were holding a festival inside the Cathedral. It couldn't have been lit up so gloriously for anything else."

Then Paul came suddenly down to earth, was seized with a sort of shame and shyness, not caused, certainly, by Celia's gentle listening, made a dash at the cake, and begged her pardon for being so hungry.

"And are you very tired?" she said, "or will you come to the Cathedral with me to-night? Don't be led away by Dr. Chanter; I want you to take care of me."

"Then that was what the illumination meant," said Paul.

Celia laughed. She got up, and as she walked away from the tea-table, lingered a moment and laid her hand on his shoulder. He was starting up, but Celia's fingers were very strong, and seemed to keep him where he was. The people on the terrace had wandered away out of sight for the present.

"Be still," said Celia. "I wanted to tell you—Vincent knows. My aunt thought she had better tell him."

"I'm awfully glad to hear it," said Paul. "I hate a secret. Thank you; that is good news. And—I'm afraid he thinks you are throwing yourself away—doesn't he, dear?"

"I don't exactly know what he said to her," answered Celia, with a dreamy smile. "He congratulated me. But he is rather cross at not having been told before."

"I don't wonder at that, you know," said Paul; and he got up in spite of the gentle restraint, took her hand from his shoulder and kissed it, and laid it back there again as he stood before her. "Sometimes I can't believe it," he said. "It is too wonderful to be true, and I shall never deserve it, if I live as long as Methuselah."

"Yes, you will," she said, "if you are as good as you were to-day."

"How was I good to-day?"

"In going away for all those hours, because I asked you."

Paul laughed.

"Little you know what I would do for you!" he said.

"Even wear dead flowers, which is sentimental, and a thing I hate," said Celia; and she pulled the shrivelled carnation from his button-hole and threw it aside.

All this time she would hardly meet his eyes, and anyone less dazzled than he was, knowing her as he did, would have been aware of a restless, absent uneasiness of manner, increasing every moment, as she stood there with her young lover, and heard a distant sound on the terrace—familiar footsteps slowly approaching, a murmur of voices in the gathering mists of sunset.

Almost immediately she left Paul and walked quietly to the other end of the room, to the farthest window, reaching it just as her aunt and cousin came up to it from the outside. Mrs. Percival was very pale; her eyes looked odd, as if she had been crying. Vincent was now perfectly calm and quiet; it seemed as if he had resigned himself to the inevitable. He hardly looked at Celia, but walked down the room towards the door, passing close to Paul by the way.

"I hear you are in great luck," he said to Paul, stopping for a moment.

"Thanks; yes," said Paul.

"I congratulate you," said Vincent.

Paul thanked him again, and he went straight out of the room.

Paul thought once more that Vincent was the most disagreeable man he had ever met.

But he forgot all drawbacks and annoyances that night in the Cathedral. The dim, soft light, the dreamy arches, the mysterious world of shadows, those high spaces into which organ and voices seemed to float away, losing themselves; the high and holy gentleness of all the service, which seemed to make no demand on souls and ears, except peace to receive what so came so peacefully; the great congregation—for all respectable Woolsborough flocked to its Cathedral in the evening. There came a time when Paul ceased to find much reality or devotion in these services; but at present he was young and happy, and able to live on dreams. He and Celia were alone together, to all intents and purposes; and somehow it seemed to Paul that she no longer objected to be seen alone with him. It was a comfort that Vincent knew: soon everybody would know; and then it would not be long before life changed into

something almost too beautiful to think about. Behaviour in church was not exactly Celia's strong point; but that evening Paul thought he had never seen anything so lovely and heavenly as the abstraction of her face. She sat looking a little upward, all through the sermon; not at the preacher, but away through the great shining screen into the half-lighted solemnity of the choir. She might have been looking straight into Paradise, with that sweet, pure, thoughtful, unconscious, exaltation of gaze and expression. It was something new to Paul; he had never seen her look like that before.

"How beautiful she is!" he thought over and over again.

His thoughts of her went on mingling with the sermon, to which he could not help listening. The preacher was a young man, who had lately been made Vicar of a large town parish in the diocese, and was already known all over England for his life and his words, which matched each other to an unusual degree. His eloquence had a special effect on young men, who crowded to hear him everywhere; in his own town they would leave their shops and offices in the middle of the day, and come to his church to hear a short address. That night at Woolsborough he was preaching about martyrdom; and as he talked on, almost everyone in the Cathedral became aware that in his or her own nature there was something, a power of some kind, which under certain circumstances might rule supreme. Then there would be a discovery that love meant sacrifice; and to those who knew what love was, martyrdom would follow naturally.

The listeners listened, Paul among them: all, no doubt, had their different thoughts. He thought what a poor thing his own love was, as far as he knew it; and yet he thought he could die for Celia. But the preacher carried him on to higher worlds; and for a few moments he even forgot Celia.

They lingered afterwards, to listen to Dr. Chanter's playing, and when they came out of the great porch into the starlight, the streams of people had nearly passed away.

"Celia," Paul said, as they crossed the Close, "it was an illumination, and at least there was one angel there. You looked like one."

"Don't," she said quickly. "I hate you to talk like that. An angel! In a year you will think me a fiend."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER VII. COMPROMISING WRITINGS.

It was through no mere coincidence, as said before, that Fred's two vampires fastened on him at the same time, and for the same sum. Mr. Dredge, who whiled away some idle hours in Miss Pattie Pratt's fascinating society, had mentioned to her incidentally, apropos of a promised present, his certainty of receiving fifty pounds from Fred. Miss Pratt thought, not unnaturally, that if Fred had fifty pounds to throw away, he might well bestow it more deservedly and judiciously than on Mr. Dredge. Hence Mr. Pratt's visit.

Now, as Mr. Dredge had bragged boastfully and positively of this prospective fifty pounds, Mr. Pratt was not to be persuaded by any protestations of Fred's that he could command nothing like so large a sum. Nor would he listen to Fred's entreaties for time; since time meant, he felt assured, the making over to Dredge the balance of the amount (twenty pounds), which Fred pressed upon him in part payment.

How Fred hated the greasy little wretch! Odious, low, loathsome, little brute! How he longed to kick him out of his rooms, and down the stairs, and through the courts, while he howled for mercy! He could almost have killed him as he sat opposite him, giving him the lie in so many words again and again.

"Lookee 'ere, Beresford, it's all gammon; if you 'ave fifty pounds for Dredge—an' you 'ave, you know, and I know—if you 'ave fifty pounds for a fellow like that, as 'ill gamble it away in a week, you 'ave

it for a pore tradesman as 'as a bill to meet to-morrow, s'elp me—to-morrow!"

The fellow was plainly tipsy, as the letting out of Dredge's name would alone have showed; and it occurred to Fred to encourage him to drink himself into such a helpless state of intoxication as would make it an easy matter to pick his pocket of the packet of letters.

"Have you really a bill to meet to-morrow, Mr. Pratt?" Fred asked in a conciliatory tone, helping himself for the first time to some brandy, and then filling Pratt's tumbler, without provoking that gentleman's remonstrance.

"Come, that's friendly—that's what I calls friendly now," Mr. Pratt replied, in approval of Fred's drinking with him. "'Ere's your 'ealth, and many on 'em," he said, taking a good pull at the tumblerful of almost neat brandy.

"And here's yours, Mr. Pratt," replied Fred, after a pause, certain of Pratt's drinking to his own health with equal enthusiasm—as he did.

He soon became so maudlin and "mixed," as to speak at once of Fred as his son-in-law, and of the fifty pounds he was in the act of extorting, as part of the fortune he could give Fred with his daughter.

"She'sh a goo' girl, Bresfor,' an' she'll 'ave a tidy bit o' money—fifty pounds down, m' boy," he said, with a wink which was meant to suggest that the fifty pounds was to come from a mysterious source; but he added immediately and almost in the same breath: "A 'eavy bill to meet t'morrow, Bresfor,' that's-where-it-ish, m' boy; 'eavy bill, s'elp me, t'morrow," he hiccupped, with a top-heavy nod.

What more he said—and he said a good deal more—Fred could not make out; for,

after the next pull at the tumbler, he became inarticulate, and, before he had quite finished it, seemingly insensible.

Fred proceeded to test his insensibility by moving the furniture about noisily, and by jingling the bottle and glass together at his very ear.

Even to this voice of the charmer Pratt was deaf; and Fred, thus reassured, stooped to search his pockets for the packet.

Pratt, lying back in the chair, with his head hanging, as it were, sideways from his neck, and snoring, or rather snorting, stertorously, offered every facility for the search, of which he was plainly unconscious.

Fred soon came upon the packet, and was drawing it out with a trembling hand, when an agitated knocking at his outer door alarmed him. Pulling the packet out hastily, and thrusting it into his pocket, he hurried towards the door, but paused midway in hesitation. Which was the greater danger, to admit his visitor to a sight of this little brute lying in the easy chair in a state of intoxication, or to allow the visitor to knock again furiously, at the risk of rousing Pratt? Why not seize his hat, and, by feigning to be in the act of going out, intercept his obtrusive visitor and prevent his entrance? Putting his hat on, he hastened to the door and opened it, to find Gower in a state of extreme agitation.

"Going out? Glad I caught you; I have had bad news from home," he said breathlessly. "My father's dying."

"What!" exclaimed Fred, amazed; but, even in his amazement, mindful that this was news also of sudden and great promotion to his friend. Gower himself was not unmindful of it either. His dying father was miles off, out of sight; but his inheritance seemed very near him now. Half, or more than half his agitation was due to a very different excitement from that of the shock of ill news.

"I've just had a telegram urging me to hurry home at once, if I wish to see him alive. I must catch the 6.30."

"It's very sudden."

"Yes; I don't know what it is—apoplexy, probably; but there's no hope."

"I am very sorry, old fellow," Fred said, while running swiftly over in his own mind what would probably be his own incidental share in his friend's good fortune—good shooting, hunting, fishing, living, and a deep purse to dip into.

"I am sure you are," replied Gower, as patronisingly as a Prince acknowledging a subject's loyalty.

Was this the parasitic Gower of a few hours since? Fred was quick to perceive the change in his friend; but quick also to accept it as natural and justifiable.

"Can I do anything for you?" he asked, with a deference due to the sudden reversal of their relative positions.

"You might see me off, if you've nothing else to do. I have just to throw a few things together, and I shall be ready."

"All right," replied Fred, slamming the door behind him, almost forgetting Pratt in this new excitement.

The little thought he did give him was not anxious, as he felt sure of finding him two hours hence as insensible as he left him now.

It was odd, even to Gower, in spite of his sudden self-importance, to find Fred helping him humbly to pack, and making solicitous suggestions for the comfort of his night journey.

"I am sorry my Hammersley visit is knocked on the head; but I shall look you all up some day," Gower was so good as to say, and Fred answered almost gratefully:

"I hope you will, old man."

It was not until he had seen him off by the 6.30 that Fred's thoughts returned to Pratt. As he walked away from the station he put his hand in his pocket, drew forth the packet, and found, to his horror, it was the wrong one. He had been too much startled by Gower's knocking to glance at it before he thrust it into his pocket. All was not lost yet, however. Pratt was probably still snoring stertorously and insensibly as he had left him.

Turning swiftly back he hailed the cab which had just brought them to the station, and gave the driver directions to make all speed to his rooms. The driver made all the speed he could; but it was some time past seven before Fred, in a fever of anxiety, hurried upstairs to his rooms. He listened outside the door for a moment or two with a quick-beating heart; but all was still as death. Then he opened the door, entered, and found the rooms empty. Pratt had plainly been in his bed-room, for Fred found his sponge lying in the basin, where the little brute, having used it to sober himself, had left it.

Fred sat down, sick to the heart. What now was to be done? The little scoundrel would discover the loss of the wrong packet, would understand the meaning of

it, and be furious at the trick which had been attempted upon him.

While trying to think of some escape out of this mess, he took the packet from his pocket mechanically, and, glancing idly at the address on the topmost envelope, recognised the writing. It was Gower's. He extracted the first letter from the envelope, and read without scruple both it and its fellows, in the order in which they came. Though morally not as objectionable as his own, they were legally much more compromising, as a substantial case of breach of promise could certainly have been founded on them. Now, a substantial breach of promise case against Gower, who was already, or would be immediately, a man of large property, promised to prove a mine of wealth to Pratt; and these letters, therefore, were worth to him a thousand-fold more than Fred's. He would be only too glad to give up Fred's in exchange for them; and Fred, without hesitation, though not without reluctance, would have made the exchange in the last resort. Self-preservation is the first law of life; and to Fred, the preservation of his own little finger was a more sacred duty than that of the whole body of any other person in the world.

Relieved by the thought of this certain escape as a last resource, Fred was able to think more coherently over the matter. What a happy stroke of business it would be to be able to recover his own letters without having to give up those of his friend! What a claim it would give him upon Gower, who would soon be in a position to answer any claim upon him magnificently! Fred was not the kind of man willingly to let die the remembrance of such a service.

He lay long awake that night trying in vain to think of some other way of recovering his letters than either by exchange or by purchase, and he at last decided to give Pratt all the money he could scrape together, and to put it down to Gower's account. It was, he considered, virtually Gower's letters that he was ransoming, since he would pay this money in place of exchanging these letters for his own. The least that Gower could do was to make repayment of a ransom which saved him from ruinous exposure and expense. At all events this was the very least Fred expected from him; and his last thought as he fell asleep that night was one of self-gratulation at the skill with which he would

turn this exceedingly ugly scrape to very great advantage.

But he reckoned somewhat hastily and without his host. He had naturally exaggerated ideas of Pratt's wrath when he felt himself utterly in his power; and equally, naturally, he scorned it unduly, now that he was certain of escape from his toils.

It is astonishing how different our ideas of the danger of a cobra are, according as we see it in our bedroom or in the Zoo. In the same way Fred's ideas of Pratt's rage and rancour were deadened as unduly now that he felt secure, as they were unduly quickened when he had felt himself at the man's mercy. For Pratt appeared in Fred's rooms the next morning in a fine frenzy.

"I was called away yesterday, Mr. Pratt, but I hoped to find you here on my return," Fred began in a conciliatory tone, only to be interrupted almost savagely by Pratt.

"Ay, you hoped to find them letters of yours you forgot to steal with t' others. Come, hand 'em out, hand 'em out, or I'll call in the police."

"Hand what out?" asked Fred, with a show of greater indignation even than he felt.

"Them letters of your friend Gower," answered Pratt, a little staggered by Fred's defiant front.

"Look here, my man, you've been at it again this morning, if it isn't delirium tremens; but mind, I'm not going to let you make a dram shop of my rooms to-day," Fred said decidedly, perceiving that Pratt was staggered, and that it was now a game of Brag between them. He possessed, besides, the courage of the conviction that he had the whip-hand of the fellow. Pratt was so completely confounded by Fred's bold and even bullying manner, that, after staring at him blankly for a minute, he thrust his hand hastily into his breast pocket to ascertain if the packet of Fred's letters was still there. Possibly they, too, had been somehow extracted by this audacious youth, and hence his audacity. On finding them safe, however, to recovered his courage.

"No," he said, in answer to Fred's inhospitable hint. "I'm not agoin' to be drugged an' robbed 'ere to-day as I was yesterday. You give me out them letters, or I go straight to the police!"

"You may go straight to the devil," Fred cried, feeling that he must now at all hazards go on with this game of Brag.

"Drugged and robbed! You drunken scoundrel! Do you think that I would have left my own letters with you, if I had condescended to touch you with a pair of tongs!"

This, of course, had occurred already to Pratt as inexplicable, but the loss of Gower's letters was inexplicable also to him up till now on any other supposition than that of their abstraction by Fred. Now, however, Fred's well-feigned fury completely imposed upon him. Was he not in his power, and would he venture to turn so savagely upon him, unless under the extreme provocation of a false charge? These considerations added to the improbability of Fred's leaving his own letters while stealing his friend's, almost convinced Pratt that he must have dropped the packet somehow and somewhere in the College Courts. As it could not be recovered if so lost, he was not put into a better temper by this reflection, and by Fred's furious abuse.

"I'm a scoundrel, am I? Not fit to be touched with the tongs by the blackguard that wrote *them*!" he cried, drawing out the packet from his pocket. "Them's fit to be touched with the tongs, I suppose, or him who wrote 'em? Scoundrel! Come, that's good from a fellow who'll be kicked out o' college before he's a day older! Do you hear that? Before you're a day older."

Pratt was so beside himself with fury at the loss of the letters, and at Fred's onslaught, that he plainly meant what he said; and Fred saw that in shunning Scylla he was falling into Charybdis.

"That won't do either of us much good, will it?" he said in a conciliatory tone. "Come, be reasonable, if you can. It isn't reasonable to think that I should take letters not worth a penny to me, and leave you my own. Now, is it? I could have robbed you, as you call it, if I liked, for you were as drunk as a lord; but I didn't, you see, though I had a good deal more right to the letters than you. And if I didn't stoop to take my own, it wasn't likely I'd take— Whose did you say they were?"

"It's none of your business whose they were. You'll find your own enough for you," Pratt replied, with savage surliness; for he was encouraged, like a cur dog, to growl at the heels of a retreating foe; and the thought of his great loss maddened him.

"Well," Fred rejoined, with an assumption of nonchalance, "if you choose to throw away letters that are as good as bank-notes to you, I can't help it. You

can get me into a scrape, of course, though not into as big a scrape as you think. But it's hardly worth twenty pounds to you to do that."

"Twenty pounds!" exclaimed Pratt, falling into the trap set for him. "Twenty pounds! I wish you good-morning."

Here he seized his hat, and turned indignantly towards the door.

"You said twenty pounds yesterday," Fred cried in innocent amazement.

"I said fifty pounds yesterday, and I say sixty pounds to-day—sixty! sixty! sixty!" he repeated, with an emphatic bang of his fist on the table.

"You said fifty pounds at first, but you came down to twenty pounds; you know you did," rejoined Fred remonstrantly.

"I don't know what I did yesterday, and I don't care. I was drugged, and drunk, and made a fool of myself! But I know now what I'm about—do you hear? and I say sixty pounds, and mean it, too—mean it, too!"

And so he did, unmistakeably. His fury at the loss of the fortune Gower's letters would have been to him, expressed itself in the savage manner of his demand, and in the demand itself. He would have insisted on twice or thrice the sum, if he thought Fred had it to give; but he felt sure that he had little more than the amount promised by him to Dredge.

Fred had emptied his purse upon the table; had opened out the two cheques it contained—Gower's, for eight pounds, and his father's, for five pounds; and had counted the sovereigns in a little heap—twenty-two pounds altogether.

"I have only twenty-two pounds in the world, Mr. Pratt, I give you my word of honour."

Pratt, assured by Dredge's confident statement that this was a gross falsehood, walked without a word to the door, opened it and banged it after him furiously. Fred stood for a few seconds white and bewildered, looking down upon the money on the table—on Gower's cheque, as it happened—and, as he looked at it, a sudden thought struck him—startled him. He glanced up reflectively for a moment, and next moment he hurried headlong after Pratt.

Pratt plainly meant vengeance, and it was some time before Fred overtook him hastening to wreak it.

"Give me an hour to get the money together," Fred begged breathlessly.

Pratt hesitated. He was so enraged by

the loss of Gower's letters and by Fred's false shilly-shallying, as he considered it, that he was eager to strike hard and heavy and at once. Still, sixty pounds was a big price to pay for a blow, however hot and heavy, and, after a moment's sullen hesitation, he agreed to return an hour hence to Fred's rooms.

Fred hurried back to his rooms, shutting the door carefully behind him; then, he opened his desk with hands which trembled so much that, after he had opened it, he went to the sideboard for the brandy-bottle and poured out nearly a glassful which he drank neat. Taking, then, Gower's cheque in steadier hands, he sat down at his desk and changed it by two strokes of the pen, from an eight-pound to an eighty-pound cheque. He had but to add a cipher to the figure, and a "y" to the letters of eight, and the thing was done. After all, he thought, as he rose from his desk, it was done solely to save Gower himself from the frightful exposure and expense of a breach of promise case. Pratt would have given him only too gladly his own letters back in exchange for those of Gower's; so it was really for the ransom of his friend's letters that he did this thing. Gower's father was probably dead by this, and would certainly be dead before the fraud would be found out; and his friend himself, in whose sole interest it was committed, would alone know of it, and suffer by it as the then head of the house. He would be only too grateful to Fred for having so ingeniously extricated him from a horrible scrape at no little risk to himself.

Before Fred had reached the bank he had thoroughly convinced himself that the thing he had done was not only generously done on his friend's sole behalf, but done honestly also. Would not Gower himself, ay, or his father, if yet alive, have been only too glad to get back such letters at a cost of eighty pounds, or ten times eighty pounds? But Fred, not having time to get the cheque altered by them, had ventured to alter it himself in their interest. As their consent was assured, the deed was virtually honest. It was, therefore, with a fairly frank face of assurance that Fred endorsed and presented the cheque, and had it unhesitatingly cashed by the clerk.

FROM AN OLD CHRONICLE.

THERE is a curious interest in going through the history of times past, told by

a historian, who has himself been dead some two hundred and fifty years. The quaint language, and odd turns of speech; the conciseness and unconscious humour of some of the descriptions; and, above all, the incidental glimpses which we get of long-forgotten domestic life, furnish an ample reward for the sometimes wearisome task of perusing old dusty black-letter tomes, the very appearance of which frightens away almost everyone but inveterate bookworms.

From a book of this sort, the writer has unearthed a few fragments of history, which, for some reason best known to the compilers, are not usually honoured with space in modern text-books. The original spelling is given as far as possible.

For instance, we have in the reign of Henry II. (1162) a bitter example of the religious intolerance of the period:—"There came into England thirty Germanes; as well men as women, who called themselves Publicanes: they denied Matrimonie, Baptisme, and the Lorde's supper. Being apprehended, the king caused that they should bee marked with an hot iron in the forehead, and whipped, and that no man should succor them. Thus being whipped and thrust out in the winter they dyed for cold." Poor Dissenters! They met with scant mercy in those days.

The punishments of the time were very various; but in the case of the lower orders almost always accompanied by some quite unnecessary refinement of cruelty; two cases in 1222:—"A young man was brought before the Archbishop of Canterbury, who suffered himself to be crucified, and to bee called Jesus. And an old woman that had bewitched the young man to such madnes, and procured her selfe to bee called Mary the mother of Christ. They were both closed up betweene two walles of stone where they ended their lives in miserie.

"The citizens of London falling out with the Baylife of Westminster and the men of the suburbs at a game of wrestling, made a great tumult against the Abbot of Westminster, for the which their captaine Constantine with other weré hanged, the other that were culpable had their feet and hands cut off." In another place we hear of a woman having been "boiled at Smithfield for witchcraft."

Our Chronicler evidently had little faith in the appetite of his readers for pure un-garnished history; he is not content with keeping accurate record of severe frosts and unseasonably hot weather; but narrates

several interesting episodes to which the countryman might have been referring, when he remarked that he "wouldn't have believed 'un, if he'd seed 'un himself."

The newspapers of our own times—especially the American ones—do not stick at a trifle in describing hailstorms, always a pet subject; but few of them would venture to relate, with a simplicity which must be the stamp of absolute truth, that, in 1206, "Great thunders and lightnings were seene, so that many men and women were destroyed, besides cattell and houses overthrown, and burned, corne in the fields was beaten downe with haile stones as bigge as goose egges." While either of the under-mentioned monsters would make the fortune of any penny showman, and might even aspire to be exhibited in the Metropolis itself: "Neere unto Oxford in Suffolke, certaine Fishers tooke in their nets a fish having the shape of a man, which fish was kept by Barthelmew de Glaunville, Custose of the Castell of Oxford, in the same castell by the space of six moneths and more for a wonder, he spake not a worde, all manner of meates hee gladly did eate, but most greedily raw fish. At length hee stole away to the sea." Very different to this taciturn merman is the next find.

"In Oxfordshire, neare to Chipingnorton, was found a Serpent having two heads and two faces like women, one face attired of the new fashion of woman's attire, the other face like the old array, and had winges like a bat." He does not say what became of her.

By way of a change from these dreadful tales, we may quote the account of an occurrence which may really be founded on fact. "The 24. of Februarie (1574) at Twekesburie a straunge thing happened, after a flood which was not great, in the afternoone there came downe the river of Aven great numbers of flies and beetels, such as Sommer evenings use to strike men in the face, in great heapes, a foot thicke upon the water, so that to credible mens judgement, they were within a payre of butts length of those flies above a hundred quarters. The milles there about were dammed up with them for the space of foure daies after, and then were clensed by digging them out with shovels, from whence they came as yet unknowne, but the day was cold and a hard frost."

We are kept constantly informed of the price of many commodities, the historian in this matter doing real service to pos-

terity. Some few examples may be given for the sake of comparison with present rates. Thus, in 1205, owing to a frost, which continued for more than two months, "A quarter of wheat was solde for a marke; which, in the dayes of Henry the second, was sold for twelve pence."

In 1600, the price stood at eight shillings the bushel; while in 1314 we have a royal proclamation which is of so much interest as giving a complete idea of the price of food at that time, that we quote it in its entirety.

"The king caused his writtes to be published for victuals, that no Oxe, stalled or corne fed, be solde for more than 24 shillings, no grasse fed Oxe for more than 16 shillings, a fat stalled Cow at twelve shillings, another Cow at ten shillings, a fat mutton corn fedde, or whole woole if well growne at twentie pence, another fat mutton shorne at fourteene pence, a fat hogge of two yeares old, at three shillings foure pence, a fat goose at two pence half penie, in the citie at three pence, a fatte Capon at two pence, in the citie at two pence halfe peny, a fat hen at one penie in the citie, one penny halfe peny, two chickens a penie, in the citie one penie halfe peny, foure pigeons for one penie, in the citie three pigeons for one penie, twentie-four eges a penie, in the citie twentie eges a penie," and so on.

The variations of the coinage are also shown with curious minuteness; while events, which to our minds are of infinitely greater importance, are barely mentioned, or even passed over in silence.

One grand frolic of the Oxford students is worth relating. It seems that:

"Octobon, a Cardinall Legat from the Pope, being lodged in the Abbey of Oaney, the schollers of Oxford slew his master Cooke, and the Legate for feare got him into the steeple of the Church, where he held him till the King's officers, coming from Abbingdon, conveyed him to Wallinford, where he accused the misdoers. Otho de Kilkenny, a standard bearer to the schollers, was taken with xii. other, and cast into prison, and long after went from Saint Paules Church of London to the Legats house barefooted and bare-headed, where they asked him forgiveness."

On the whole he is a good old man this Chronicler of ours. His work seems to have been a labour of love, in more senses than one; for, in an obituary notice of that Edmond Dudley who was beheaded by

Henry the Eighth at the beginning of his reign, he takes occasion to remark :

"This Edmond Dudley, in time of his imprisonment, compiled a notable booke, intituled : 'The Tree of Commonwealth,' which booke comming to my hand, I gave a copie thereof to Robert Dudley, late Earle of Leicester, at whose request and earnest perswasion I then collected my summari of the cronicles, and dedicated the same, with the increase thereof from time to time, to his honour, in reward whereof Ialwaies had his thanks and commendation, but never otherwaies to the value of a penie, whatsoever heth been reported."

Well, good or evil report has long ceased to hurt him ; and we, who smile over his oddities, may well pause for a moment and consider whether our work will endure for so long. For, however strange it may appear to our eyes, it is the good work of a master workman—and that only—which keeps its freshness after two hundred and fifty years.

A CYMRIC COURTSHIP.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS. PART II.

So, with Mary's reluctant approval, the expedition to the caves was carried out and the smart young lady from London showed the practical side of her character by bringing a mackintosh cloak to protect her spruce blue costume from any possible detriment in the dark galleries. John carried the cloak and marched on ahead with the Minister, who wished to give the two girls a good opportunity of making friends. But Eleanor was not so communicative to Mary as she had been to Mary's admirer, and the two trudged along almost in silence.

"Well, and what have you been chattering about as you came?" the old man asked cheerfully, when they reached their destination.

"We have talked but little," Mary replied drily. "She does not understand my English, and hers is too quick for me."

Their way had led them into Dolau-gleision Park ; where, half-way up the breast of a lofty ridge, a ravine spread out into a labyrinth of clefts and rocky masses. A brook sprang about from ledge to ledge in a reckless fashion, as if bewildered with the confusion of tree and boulder, and marking its course on the hill-side were clumps of yellow ash and russet oak, and a luxuriant undergrowth of

blackberry and maple. Without a guide it would not have been easy to find the entrance to those long-abandoned treasure sources of a long-departed dominant race ; but John was a competent cicerone, and when they had reached the entrance of the largest cave, the old Minister sat down to rest and left him in sole charge. Eleanor's silent fit had quite taken its departure. She scarcely gave the school-master time to answer her voluble questions. She occupied him still more completely by the manifold attentions she required.

"I wish I were like Miss Rees," she said, smiling amiably. "She seems as surefooted as a mountain pony. I believe she could go blindfold. Here, Mr. Morgan, can't you see how I am stumbling? You must let me hold your arm, and I will give you my candle so that I can use your stick with my other hand."

And so the procession was formed : John and Eleanor in animated conversation leading the way, while Mary followed, silent and sore at heart, walking very erect, as a protest against Eleanor's want of support. Unfortunately no one was aware that she was protesting, except herself, for neither of her companions took any notice of her ; and when she paused for a few moments and seated herself on a fallen rock, and left them to go on without her, they did not observe her desertion. Their voices—principally Eleanor's—came back to her in burst of amusement. They must have reached the end of the cave. John apparently was explaining to Eleanor how far the soldiers had worked back into the hill, for she heard Eleanor interrupt him with a decisive : "There, there ; I'm not a school child." Then the subject of conversation must have changed, for as they returned towards her she could hear John say, "Then you will let me teach you Welsh?"

Eleanor's reply she lost, but John's voice was easier to her ear ; "Oh, but indeed, I have plenty of time. My school is over at four. I am always at liberty in the evening, except when it is choir practice."

"But," protested Eleanor, "I shall find it so hard."

"Nay, nay ; if you will have a lesson very often it will soon come easy."

They had reached the spot where Mary was sitting. John was looking into his companion's face, careless of all else. It was Eleanor who discovered her.

"Ah! there you are," she cried. "We

thought you had lost yourself in some of the ins and outs."

The old Minister was still seated where they had left him, his broad-brimmed hat on his knee, his long white hair a little ruffled by the soft wind; but his musings had been broken in upon, and he was no longer alone.

A short, round-faced old woman sat beside him on the stones, her elbows resting on her knees, and her chin propped up on her hands, watching from under the brim of her tall hat, with some interest, for the reappearance of the rest of the party.

As they came out from the cave she rose, greeted Mary and the schoolmaster in Welsh, and then turning to Eleanor, continued in the same language:

"And so you are the daughter of Gwen Davies. Well, she needn't be ashamed of you, I'm sure."

"Gwen is dead," replied her grandfather, speaking in English, "and Eleanor has grown up knowing no Welsh. She is more of an Englishwoman than a Welsh-woman."

Eleanor was busy, with John's assistance, in emerging from her chrysalis mackintosh state into her blue butterfly glory.

"But I am to learn Welsh," she put in demurely. "Mr. John Morgan has promised to teach me."

The old woman pursed up her lips and then said something in Welsh which made the schoolmaster blush.

"That is very unfair," said Eleanor with a pout. "You are talking about me in a language I do not understand."

"You're a knowing lass," said the old woman. "You'll soon be beyond all the others here."

"I sha'n't have to go very fast either to do that," replied Eleanor, turning her head.

"Eleanor!" said her grandfather reprovingly.

"Nay, Minister," interposed the old woman, "let her have her way. It does a girl good to be a bit pert. And did your mother ever talk to you about me?" she went on, turning to Eleanor.

"About you?" returned Eleanor doubtfully. "I——"

"About old Peggy of Cwmgoggerddan—how she used to come and ask old Peggy to give her charms for her sweethearts?"

"Oh yes," cried Eleanor, with a readiness which imposed on all the party save one, "of course she did."

"Why, Eleanor," said Mary, "when I spoke of Peggy on Sunday, you——"

"And," went on Eleanor, not heeding the interruption, but availing herself of the light that it threw on her interlocutor, "you used to tell her fairy stories, as well as give her charms."

"I used to tell her stories of the fairies; but, as to the charms, why, if I confess that I gave her what she wanted, the Minister'd scold me even now. He don't allow of charms and he won't believe in fairies, though, Minister, if some one didn't keep the old tales in mind they'd all die out, and the hills would be like a harp with its strings all cut away. Old tales do no harm, and they oughtn't to be forgotten."

"Quite right," assented the Minister, "and the lass has heard a good store of old tales to-day, for John Morgan has been telling her the story of the caves."

"The schoolmaster!" interrupted Margaret in derision. "John Morgan telling the story of the caves. I know better. He's been saying they were gold mines, and that foreign soldiers dug them out in the days of Caradoc. But don't you go to believe him, my girl; these caves belonged to the mountain fairies long before the stranger ever set foot on the hills, and the gold is the fairies' treasure, and no man dare carry it away, or the fairy queen would seize the thief and drown him in the Well of the White Princess, so that no one would know what had become of him."

"Ab, that reminds me," cried John, "you must see the Well of the White Princess before we go back."

"Hold hard, schoolmaster," put in Peggy. "With your leave I'll lead the way this time. One tale spoilt with book-learning and big words is enough for one afternoon."

The Minister began to enter a protest against the delay; it was getting late and chill; the sun would soon be down; they had an hour's walk before them; but the old woman would not be baulked. She rose from her seat, took her short thick stick, and began to lead the way among the trees and rocks, followed by Eleanor and John Morgan.

She stopped in front of a wall of rock, at the top of which bushes and ferns made a fringe of colour, but which was otherwise perfectly bare. The rock was intercepted at the bottom by a cavernous cleft, about a yard in width and five feet in height, but whose internal dimensions were concealed by the heavy shadow of the rock and the gathering twilight.

"Here," said Margaret, "is the Well of the White Princess."

"Here!" reiterated Eleanor. Why, there isn't even a drop of water."

The old woman waved her hand theatrically towards the opening in the rock.

"Come nearer," she said. "Listen, and look in here."

In some astonishment Eleanor did as she was bid. As she bent her head forward into the dark recess she could hear the rushing, surging sound of a great volume of water, but only as her eyes grew accustomed to the gloom could she distinguish about six feet below her the eddying surface, to which scarce a gleam of light could penetrate, even in the brightest day.

"Ugh!" she said, drawing back with a shudder, "what a chill, creepy, dark hole of a place!"

"Nay," said John, with the calmness of superior knowledge, "it is but the spring which feeds the brook; the water escapes by the clefts in the rock and reappears."

"Schoolmaster!" interrupted Peggy decisively, "you've never been down the hole to see, have you? My dear," she continued, turning to Eleanor, "this is the Well of the White Princess."

"And why is it called after a White Princess," asked Eleanor, "when it is so black and cold?"

"That's just what I am about to tell you," she returned, evidently relishing her own importance as chronicler. "At least as well as my Sassonaeg will allow me; and all I ask John Morgan is that he'll sit down and hold his peace, and not try to spoil the story by mending it."

John Morgan did as he was required, and this was the story which the old woman told.

"Once upon a time, long before the Saxon came into the land, a great King lived on the hills of Dolangleision, and kept his Court as Courts were kept then, which you may suppose was quite different from the Court of Queen Victory.

"This King had one daughter, and she was so fair that every man who looked on her was filled with love for her, whereby you see there were many hopeless lovers in Carmarthenshire then. She was also very rich, for she had great flocks of sheep and droves of cattle, and many golden jewels for her dower; and the Princess came wooing from far and near, because the land was poor; and a good fortune with a nice wife is a fine thing for any man.

"But she would none of them, for she had fixed her heart on a kinsman of her mother's, who was but a poor soldier in the King's train. For this her parents were very wroth, and though her lover was humble and lowly, he was not hidden from the sharp eyes of those who longed to work him harm. So the Princess and he had to meet by stealth, and here, at the foot of this rock, was their meeting place.

"At last there came war into the land; but it was not the war which the Saxons made,* and the King at Dolangleision was in mortal need of a strong arm, for though he was rich in flocks and in gold, he was not strong in battle. But the only strong chief who could help him was among the mountains by Owm Gygfrwn, brooding over the cruelty of the Princess; and he refused to come forth and fight unless she would promise to be the reward of his valour.

"So she thought and thought, as women will, and at last she saw that she dare not bring ruin on the whole land, so she promised; and then, when the chief of Owm Gygfrwn had won a battle over the stranger and the wedding was to be, she bade her old lover meet her once more by the sounding water in the cave.

"I cannot tell all they said. It is so long ago that even the fairies have forgotten it, and no one else heard it; therefore none can say whether the forsaken lover, or the desperate Princess, or the fairies thought of the way of escape. Whichever it was that whispered it first, it is certain that they both agreed to it, and, clasping one another in a close embrace, they leaped into the black water, and left no trace behind; which would have remained a secret if the Princess's promised husband had not tracked her and arrived at the tryst just in time to see them disappear, and that is why the well is called the Well of the White Princess."

"Thank you," said Eleanor, "it is a pretty story; prettier than all that stiff stuff Mr. Morgan talks about subterranean springs."

"It's a pretty story enough," said John, with an attempt at self-assertion; "but what I told you was true; while this, you must see, is not true."

"Not true!" cried the old woman; "of course it's every word true. Let those

* Perhaps she meant the Roman invasion under Suetonius Paulinus.

who doubt its truth prove their own words."

"It's amusing enough to listen to," returned the schoolmaster doggedly; "but there is nothing, I say, to prove it is true."

He was not arguing because he cared for the truth or untruth of the legend; he simply felt annoyed that the chief interest of the well centred round Peggy's story.

"Yes, yes, schoolmaster, I know. You mean there's nothing about it in the school-books; but look you here, lassie, if you want to know about the White Princess, you come here on Saint Sylvester, just as the old year passes."

She concluded her sentence with wise head-shakings.

"Does she come back then?" asked Eleanor. "I should like to see a ghost."

John Morgan made a movement to start. No one heeded him.

"You'd like to see her, I can tell you," returned Margaret, "for if you asked her aright, she'd show you all you could ever want to know in the water of her well."

A look half-curious, half-credulous, passed over the girl's face.

"And how should I have to ask her?" she asked.

The old woman nodded again and looked even wiser than before; but instead of answering she turned round and called between the rocks: "Ah, Mr. Reginald, good evening to you; I heard your foot on the dry leaves, though you did go lightly so as to cheat poor old Peggy."

At her call a tall, well-dressed young man, with a gun on his shoulder and a dog at his heels, turned on the hill-side and came towards them. He spoke first to Peggy, but looked at Eleanor.

"Good evening, Peggy. I heard voices, but I didn't know you were here working spells or I would have come to look on without being called. Why, schoolmaster, do I see you at this kind of thing? I should have thought you knew better."

Margaret was readier with a retort than the schoolmaster.

"I'm working no spells, Mr. Reginald, and I'm not teaching schoolmaster any evil—it'd be a pity to send a good young man like him wrong; but I'm telling the story of the well to the Minister's granddaughter, Eleanor Carroll, who is strange in these parts, as you can see by her smart clothes, and hear by her speech when she 'alks.'"

Eleanor had been returning the new

comer's scrutiny. She saw that he was about twenty-two, good-looking in a sort of good-humoured, easy-going way, without any great claim to distinction, except by his height and his figure, which was fine and manly. Yet he was undoubtedly a gentleman—Sir Evan's eldest son, she rightly guessed; and he looked as if he could appreciate her face and her pretty clothes, so her vain little heart gave a great leap; the schoolmaster was instantaneously deposed from his dignity of premier admirer, and Mr. Reginald Gwynne was as promptly seated on the vacant throne.

"So she's been telling you about the well, has she? And you've heard how you only have to look into the water at the right minute to see the face of your future husband; but you mustn't listen to her," he said with mocking gravity. "She's a dangerous old lady, and will get into sad trouble some day for prying into dangerous matters."

"Listen to him," cried Peggy, with evident relish; "and just to think that he comes and sits by my hearth for an hour at a time, and hears the old stories over and over."

"I just sit by her hearth to get warm when I've been chilled on the hills," continued Mr. Gwynne in the same tone, "and she tells me the stories, whether I want them or whether I don't."

"And has she ever told you how to ask the White Princess to show you the story of your future in the well on New Year's Eve?"

"Not she; and if she had, I wouldn't have come across the hills at midnight to try the spell. I know there would be nothing to see."

"Not for you to see," replied Peggy; "that's true enough. The spell can only work when it is spoken by a maiden's lips. You would see nothing in the water even if you looked in while it was telling its secrets. Though," she added, with an admiring glance, "it would be a happy maid who could see your bonny face looking at her from the water of the well."

"Oh well," he returned, "as long as I can hear what a pretty girl has to say from her own rosy lips, I don't care to learn my fate by any magic. And as to you, Miss Eleanor, if you want to see lovers you had better keep your pretty eyes open in broad daylight, and not run the risk of spoiling them by catching cold on a midnight excursion up here."

Eleanor said something about the use-

lessness of having eyes at all in such a lonely part of the world; but Margaret interrupted her:

"Tush, tush! You know better than that already." At which innuendo the schoolmaster looked conscious, though perhaps it was not altogether directed at him. "And now good-bye to ye all," she continued. "I'm going over the pass; and, John Morgan, you can make haste and catch up the Minister and Mary of Ynysau. You won't want a fortune-teller to say who is jealous, if you don't mind what you're about. And you, Mr. Reginald, take your way to Dolauhleision; the schoolmaster will be guide enough for the lass to the bottom of the hill."

But Mr. Reginald either did not hear, or did not heed Margaret's advice. As she quitted the group, he held out his hand to Eleanor to help her over a fallen boulder. And when Margaret turned backwards to look after her late companions, she could see three forms disappearing in the dusk; and by the sounds of talking and laughing, she could discern that an animated conversation was being carried on, in which she felt sure that Mr. John Morgan, despite his proficiency in *Sassonaeg*, was taking a very unimportant share.

That night when Eleanor went to bed in the little whitewashed, slant-roofed room over the Minister's kitchen, she felt that *Llansawyl* might possibly be an amusing place after all; though whether the schoolmaster was quite right in flattering himself about the same time that the expedition to the caves had been a perfect success, is very doubtful.

The summer of Saint Luke was over. November had settled down, cold and sombre. A week of rain and mist had sodden the hills, stripped the trees, swollen the streams, and made the by-lanes almost impassable. It was a cheerless night—a real night for the chimney-corner—yet there was light streaming from the windows of *Llansawyl* Chapel on to the wet high-road, and the sound of music from within joined the moan of the north-east wind without. The energetic singers were having their weekly practice, from which the worst of weather could not deter them.

John, the schoolmaster, was standing in front of the gallery, beating time with his hand against the cover of his book. Generally speaking, he filled the difficult position of conductor greatly to his own

credit and satisfaction, and avoided, with much discretion, all occasion of unpleasant discussion with such headstrong members as those whose vocal organs were much more useful than their opinion. But to-night—perhaps it was the fault of the weather—things did not incline to go smoothly, and several arguments had been carried on not too amicably.

"I think," said a fat man, who led the tenors—he was David Rees, of the mill—speaking dubiously and deferentially—"I think, if I might be allowed to say it, that we're trying to take this time a bit too quick. It ain't possible to sing all them ins and outs and ups and downs as they ought to be sung, if we go galloping through as if we'd hired racehorses to help us."

He finished up with a feeble joke, because the schoolmaster looked as if he resented the amendment.

"We've got into the way of dragging, David Rees," he returned. "And I've been told—more than once, too—that our singing is spoilt on account of being so slow."

"And might I make so bold as to ask," said another man, who looked bold and fiery enough for anything—he was Evan Rees, the host of the *Dolauhleision* Arms, and Sir Evan's farm bailiff—"who made them remarks? It all depends on whose opinion it is, whether we are to be guided by it, or no."

"That's neither here nor there, Evan Rees," said John testily; "the remark was made by one who can judge better than most of us."

"That's your opinion, John Morgan," replied Evan; "as for mine, let me tell you, I happened in *Llandilo* last Sunday, and I went to chapel there, and when I heard the singing, says I to myself, 'It strikes me we go a good bit too fast at *Llansawyl*.'"

"And that's what I should have said," added the miller cautiously, "though I don't want to pretend to more knowledge than the schoolmaster."

"No one don't want to pretend, I hope," replied the landlord. "I'm sure John Morgan won't want to stick up himself, or his acquaintance, who very like is some church-going body, for knowing more about fast and slow than they do at *Llandilo*, where they've got a real organ with pipes, and a man to play it."

"Well, what's the use of so much haggling?" cried the schoolmaster; "have your own way, and let some one else beat time."

But no one came forward at the challenge, and John resumed his office with a bad grace.

"Taint no use," cried Sally Rees, the miller's daughter, after a few more lines; "neither me nor no one else can keep together at this rate: we're all at sixes and sevens. John Morgan, whatever for are you in such a hurry? There's no one waiting for you up the road this wet night."

There was a general laugh at this joke, to which the schoolmaster responded by wheeling round and taking his place among the singers.

"Come, John; come, schoolmaster; don't 'ee be huffed," cried one and another, really concerned when they saw how angry he looked.

Mary stole a timid backward glance at him which he did not heed.

"I'm not huffed a bit," he said, mendaciously; "but if I'm to be found fault with every minute, I'd best clear out for a better man."

The rest of the proceedings were not very cheerful; every one, except the red-faced landlord, felt that they had been too hard on the schoolmaster; while as to Mary of Ynysau, she left off singing in sheer distress, and her eyes kept filling with tears. For the last four or five weeks she had seen an incomprehensible change stealing over John, a change for the worse, which her wounded pride hoped was perceptible to no one else; but this public display of temper over a trifling and by no means unusual occurrence, seemed to mark an epoch in his deterioration which every one must observe. She dreaded to think what might be coming next.

The choir dispersed, shouting "good nights" and good-natured cautions to one another out of the damp darkness, and Mary found herself walking as usual with John Morgan. It was a golden opportunity for courting, such an opportunity as John had often longed for; but now it had been granted, he did not come and walk near Mary, or draw her half-resisting hand through his arm, or offer to hold her umbrella over her; he marched sullenly on through the splashing puddles for a hundred yards or so, and it was Mary who broke the silence.

"It was real nasty of Evan Rees," she began timidly, "to speak as he did, but you mustn't brood over it, John. They know you're better at the music than they are, and that's why they try to put themselves up, and you down."

"They can set me and themselves how they like and where they like," replied John ungraciously. "They're a set of fools."

"Nay, John, don't go for to call names, that won't mend matters; let's think no more about it."

"Who said I was thinking about it? I wouldn't waste a thought on the whole blessed crew."

"Well, if you are not worrying about that you are about something else," persisted Mary.

She had hovered for weeks on the brink of this explanation, and her voice sounded strange to herself as she began it.

"I'm sure you've got something on your mind," she said with an effort. "I heard it in your voice when you met me at the corner to-night; I saw it in your face in the chapel; and I can tell it by all your ways."

"I don't know what you mean, Mary," he replied, trying to speak naturally, and so to dismiss an unpleasant subject. "There's nothing in my face or voice that I know of."

"Then there's something you don't know of, and, what's more, there's been something about you that's troubled me a good bit back. I may just as well speak up while I'm about it. You're no more like what you were at harvest time than chalk is like cheese."

Perhaps Mary hoped that an appeal of this sort from so reticent a person as herself, under such favourable circumstances, might touch the truant and reclaim him; but if she had such a hope, it was disappointed.

They had reached the foot of the Ynysau field lane. John stood still.

"I suppose you wouldn't be frightened, Mary," he said hesitatingly, "if you was to go up the hill alone for once."

Mary saw in a moment that her long-prepared speech had fallen on deaf ears, and she bitterly resented the humiliation.

"Frightened!" she cried. "Not I! I leave it to such silly-headed things as the Minister's Eleanor to be frightened o' nothing."

She had thrown down the glove.

"There's no need to bring in anyone else's name as I can see," replied John, taking it up. "If you arn't frightened, you arn't, and it doesn't matter about other people; and if you arn't afraid of going alone, I've got a word to speak with the Minister; and if I'm not there in a few minutes it'll be too late for him."

"Minister!" exclaimed Mary derisively. "You've got no word to speak with Master Davies that wouldn't keep till to-morrow or next week, or next year, for the matter of that. I should ha' thought you were above making them sort of pretences."

"You don't know all my business," said John, with an imprudent effort to justify himself. "Why should I make pretences?"

"Ah! why indeed? That's best known to yourself. There ain't much need to ask why you're so changed since harvest time. If you silly, dressed-up girl hadn't come to Master Davies's, you wouldn't look about for reasons to go there instead of coming up to Ynysau and eating your porridge comfortably in the chimney corner."

"I suppose you're jealous," said John, with a half laugh. "I never thought to see you jealous after the way you put me off last time I talked to you."

"Jealous!" she retorted quickly. "Not I. If you want to go and talk to the Minister's Eleanor, and say all over again to her what you've said to me half a dozen times—go! I don't want to keep you. Did I ever say I wanted you? Did I ever make any promise all the times you've asked me? Not I; and I'm glad I held back now. I tell you, there was always that about you I couldn't make up my mind to take. Only, if you are going to take up with someone else, you might have chosen one that's respectable."

"Mary Rees," interrupted John hotly, "have a care what you're saying. I make no answer to what you say of me, though you wouldn't have me when I asked you; but if you can't let them alone that does no harm beyond being better-looking and pleasanter company than you are yourself, you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"There, there, John Morgan, that'll do. I'll leave shame to them that has something to be ashamed of, there's none so blind as those that won't see. It isn't hard to deceive the Minister, nor yet Mrs. Davies, else they'd both have guessed why Mr. Gwynne comes hanging about their house, and why she goes sneaking out after dusk. No, John Morgan, you'll get no good by going after her, and you know it—not that I want you"—this final reiteration seemed necessary—"for I tell you now that I won't ever walk with you again, and don't you have the impudence to show your face any more up at Ynysau." And with these concluding remarks, Mary set her face up-

hill, and strode steadily away into the black darkness, taking no notice of John's attempt to answer.

Her heart was very sore, and her face was very hot. The rain which streamed down it did not cool it, and the tears which mingled with the rain did not ease her trouble, for poor Mary could hardly imagine a future for herself in which John the schoolmaster should never be seen any more at Ynysau.

As to John, he stood and hesitated for a few moments whether or not he should follow her. He had deserved her anger, he knew; and he knew, too, that though he had bidden her be ashamed, he had much more to be ashamed of than she had; in fact, he knew that he was in the wrong altogether; yet the result of his deliberation was that he went on to the Minister's house, and tried to forget all about Mary of Ynysau, her wounded pride, and her very natural indignation.

CHRONICLES OF THE ISLE OF MAN.

THE inhabitants of the adjacent island of Great Britain may be said to regard the "Isle of Man" with curiously mingled feelings. To some it appears remote and friendless, if not precisely melancholy and slow; a distant islet planted among tempestuous seas, noted chiefly for cats without tails, and for halfpence which, although not quite in the same predicament, have a curious arrangement on the "tail" side of the coin, where familiar Britannia is replaced by the three legs of man. To others, again, the island suggests something almost too familiar and hackneyed, the resort of countless excursionists and holiday makers, chiefly from the manufacturing districts, who make a kind of summer fair about its shores.

But there are times when the island is quiet enough, and with its wild hills and secluded valleys, its pleasant wooded glens and cliffs hung with verdure, its bold headlands and wild coast scenes, forms a region full of interest, where old-world traditions and superstitions still linger. Here is a kingdom to itself, with its own laws, its own institutions; a happy, ideal kind of community, where the tax-gatherer never calls, and the exciseman is unknown. To be sure the island acknowledges, to some extent, the authority of the British Parliament. Such statutes as are expressly en-

acted to apply to the Isle of Man have the force of law; but it is only after they have been proclaimed by the Tynwald Court from the Tynwald Hill, proclaimed to north and south, and east, and west, both in the common English speech, and in that more ancient Manx language which still remains a spoken tongue. The Manx is, indeed, a dialect akin to Gaelic, and is evidence of the close connection of the ancient people of the island with the dwellers on the adjacent coasts of Ireland, of Galloway, and of those western isles and shores of Scotland, once peopled by the Gael and where he still lingers.

There was a time, perhaps, when Man was deemed an integral part of Britain; it is the Monan of the Welsh, and their chronicles affirm that it once formed a part of the Kingdom of North Wales. And in this chosen island, it is said, once flourished the flower of Celtic poetry and civilisation. Here Druids, Bards, and Ovates held their solemn assemblies, and the pure and noble mysteries of Druidism were celebrated long after the neighbouring coasts were shrouded in the gloom of barbaric invasion. But those days have left no trace behind them, unless possibly in the numerous stone circles found all about the island, which tradition ascribes to the Druids. But in ancient stone monuments of all kinds the island is conspicuously rich: rude stone pillars, kistvaens, and sepulchral remains of all kinds abound in every direction, and no doubt Gael and Cymry were preceded by other races, which have left only such scanty memorials of their existence.

But the existing institutions of the island seem to be moulded in Scandinavian form, modified by Gaelic and other influences. Such is the division of the island into sheadings, each with its Coroner as chief officer, corresponding to the Saxon Sheriff, and its lagmen or lockmen, as representatives of the community at large. The parishes, with their wide limits, cut up into numerous treens or townships, rather resemble those of the ancient Northumbrian Kingdom; and their names—generally Kirk somebody, the somebody usually being a Celtic saint—seem also due to Northumbrian influences. The parish officials, the Captain and Sumner—Chaucer's Sumpnour—are Scandinavian enough; but the Moar is clearly of Gaelic origin, and is probably the ancient accountant of the village.

The organisation of the governing powers

again seems purely Scandinavian. The Tynwald Court, the House of Keys, the Deemsters, or Judges—these all have unquestionable Danish features; and the two chief sections of the island—its shires, so to speak, of north and south—originate, it is said, from the first Norwegian conquest of the island, an event which happened at the same time as, and had similar results to, the Norman conquest in England. For the Northmen took all the best land which was in the south part of the island, while they permitted the vanquished Manxmen to settle in the north, where there was much barren land, with wastes and bogs.

Before the Norwegian conquest, however, the Danes had established themselves as rulers over the island. It was early in the tenth century that a Danish horde descended upon Man, under their chief, Orry, whose grave on the hill-side above Laxey is still to be seen. But between Dane and Celt there was no inveterate antipathy. They had a common feeling, too, against the "Sawxen." The rule of the Danes seems to have been acquiesced in complacently enough by the Manxmen; their piracies brought wealth to the island, and they kept all other robbers at a distance.

In the middle of the eleventh century—about the time when William of Normandy was mustering his hosts for the invasion of England—Godred, son of Cynric, was on the throne of Man; a terrible and cruel man, who was hated both by the Manxmen and his own Danish chiefs. A warrior from Iceland, of Norse origin, one Godred Crovan, who had followed King Harold Hardrada to England, and had witnessed the destruction of the King and his army at Stanford Bridge, had taken refuge in the Isle of Man. The keen-eyed warrior saw how unpopular was the Monarch of Man, and determined to supersede him. He went back to Norway to gather a force for the enterprise; but before he returned the other Godred had died, and his son Fingal reigned in his stead. Now Fingal was the very opposite to his father, and a splendid and noble youth, beloved by all the island, and especially by the Gaelic people, to whom his name seemed to promise a reversion to the glories of the old half-mythic Kings of their own race. Thus the Norwegian chief found the whole island in arms against him. A great battle was fought, but the invaders won the day; the beloved Fingal was slain; and the island was at the mercy of the victors.

Thus the Icelander became the founder of a line of Norwegian Kings, who conquered the Hebrides, and annexed them to Man, making the whole a Kingdom, sometimes independent, sometimes tributary to the Crown of Norway.

With certain gaps and many struggles between rival claimants, the Norwegian line ran on, holding Man firmly enough, but the Hebrides by an uncertain tenure. Now a powerful chief, like Summerled of Argyll, claimed the isles, threatened to conquer Man itself. Again some hard-hitting King of Man reclaimed the western isles and plundered the coast of Scotland—of Ireland too, perhaps—and gained much renown and booty. There is one Harold, a popular Prince, who visited the Court of Henry the Third, and was knighted there. Then he sailed to Norway, was well received by King Haaco, married a beautiful Princess of the Royal house, and set out with his galleys adorned with bright streamers and flashing shields, in joy and triumph to his native island. But the Royal ship was wrecked on the Redland: the Prince and his beautiful bride were drowned. From that time nothing went well in Man. A brother, Reginald, succeeded—a youth of wild passions and evil life. He, having only reigned a month, was succeeded by another brother, after a general hurly-burly; but this one was the last of the line, and when he died childless a few years after, there was an end of the Royal house of Man.

In the confusion which followed Man was glad to acknowledge the supremacy of King Alexander the Third of Scotland. But the Scottish Thane, appointed Governor of the island, proved so rapacious and grasping that the Manxmen rebelled, and, surrounding the slender Scotch garrison, threatened to put them to the sword. Here, however, the Bishop interfered and persuaded the islanders not to take advantage of their numbers, but to fight fair, choosing thirty champions from among them to encounter the same number of Scots; the question of independence or submission to abide the result. The combatants met in a valley between two mountains, and the combat lasted from nine in the morning till sunset, when the last of the Manxmen fell, leaving four of the Scotch alive to claim the victory. The obnoxious Thane, however, was numbered among the slain, which was something to be thankful for in the midst of disaster.

To the Scottish King, Man owes, it is

said, its familiar cognizance of the three legs arranged in tripod method. Before his time the island emblem had been the Norwegian galley, afterwards adopted by the Lords of the Isles. But the Scottish connection was never popular in Man, and, indeed, brought nothing but trouble to the island in connection with the wars of Baliol and Bruce. So troublesome were the islanders to their monarchs, that, in the reign of Edward the Third, we find the English King making an agreement with his brother of Scotland that in the event of Ireland rebelling against England, or Man against Scotland, neither of the Kings should give support to the rebels against the other.

But about this time a new claimant appeared for the crown of Man. The old Norwegian Kings had left behind them certain descendants on the female side, one of whom, styling herself Offrica de Connaught, "heir of the Isle of Man," had conveyed her shadowy rights by formal deed to Sir Simon Montacute. The grant was probably worthless in its origin, but it was made valuable by subsequent events. Resident at the Court of King Edward was a certain Mary de Waldeheof, descended from the ancient Royal house of Man. A marriage was arranged between this lady and Sir William Montacute, the son of old Sir Simon, so as to unite these two unsubstantial claims; and, by the aid of the King, Sir William was enabled to lead an expedition to the island, and, after a desperate struggle, he succeeded in driving out the Scotch, and was crowned King of Man, with the apparent goodwill of the islanders, A.D. 1344.

The same Countess and Queen, his wife, is otherwise remarkable as the heroine, probably, of the famous legend of the Garter, and "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*;" and she also it was who defended the Castle of Wark, Northumberland, in 1341, against David Bruce and the Scots, when King Edward raised the siege in person and became violently enamoured of the rescued Countess.

But apart from the dignity of the kingship, Montacute got little out of his island. The enormous cost of his expedition compelled him to mortgage the revenues of the island to Anthony de Bec, Bishop of Durham, who held them during his life. The second Earl of Salisbury, however, recovered his rights, but sold them speedily to William de Scrope, Earl of Wilts, who was beheaded by Henry the

Fourth, and then the Kingdom of Man was held to be forfeited to the Crown.

It was soon granted to the Percys, but as soon forfeited by their fall, and then the crown of Man was assigned to Sir John Stanley, who probably never visited his dominions.

John, the second of the Stanley dynasty, was duly crowned on the Tynwald Hill, and seems to have acknowledged the ancient rights of the islanders in a way that secured their attachment to his dynasty.

In the reign of Henry the Eighth the Stanleys abandoned the formal title of King of Man, in prudent respect to the jealous temper of the English monarch. But whether as Kings or Lords of Man the Stanleys' rule was not unpopular in the island, and the line ran on in general peace and prosperity till the days of the Civil Wars.

Under James, Earl of Derby, the island held out for the Royal cause, till long after that cause was hopeless. The brave Countess, who had defended Lathom House so gallantly, after its surrender joined her husband on the island. The unhappy Earl, accompanied by the Governor and some three hundred Manxmen, sailed for the mainland, and marched across the country to join the forces of Charles the Second, then on the march from Scotland.

After the disastrous defeat of Worcester, the Earl was taken prisoner, and afterwards executed at Bolton.

In his last letter to his wife he pointed out to her how useless it would be to continue the struggle, and urged her to make the best terms she could for herself with the Parliament. Resistance, indeed, against the whole power of England, was utterly hopeless, and Countess Charlotte made overtures for surrender.

The forces of the island, with ten warships, were then under the command of Captain William Christian, who, on the appearance of the Parliamentary forces, made haste to surrender and make his peace with the Parliament. Possibly the Countess might have made better terms had the Manxmen been more enthusiastic in her defence; but, as it was, she obtained a safe conduct for herself and her children into Holland.

Under the Commonwealth the island was granted to bold Fairfax, but it does not seem that he ever took possession of the government. At the Restoration

the Stanley dynasty was restored. And now Charles, the reigning Earl, took a cruel revenge upon William Christian, who was arraigned upon a charge of treason against Countess Charlotte, in surrendering to the Commonwealth.

William Christian, whose memory is still preserved among the Manx as Iliam Dhoan or Brown William, was not, perhaps, a very heroic character, but his unhappy fate—for he was shot on Hango Hill, in pursuance of a hasty sentence of the Deemsters—has secured the sympathies of succeeding generations, and the island Muse has celebrated his hard lot in numerous ballads, and it was noted with secret satisfaction that a blight seemed to rest upon all those in the island who were connected with the murder of Christian, and that their families died out in the next generation, or came to utter destitution.

It is curious, too, to remark that the former fate attended the main stem of the house of Stanley—the sons of Earl Charles leaving no issue—so that none of the present inheritors of the honours of the house of Stanley are descended from the slayer of Christian.

When the last King Stanley died in 1730, the royalties of Man were inherited by the Duke of Athole, grandson of one of the daughters of the heroic Charlotte of Lathom; no insignificant dower, for the royalties of Man were eventually sold to the British Government for sums exceeding half a million of pounds sterling.

The British Government was anxious to acquire the lordship of Man, not so much to round off the dominions of the Crown, as on account of the loss to the Customs revenue which was caused by the heavy smuggling carried on between the island and the mainland. Foreign merchants took up their abode in the towns of Man; foreign ships frequented its ports; fast-sailing luggers hovered here and there, all engaged in the smuggling trade.

From one part or another of the cliffs that border the island, a vast panorama of all the neighbouring coasts is revealed. The Welsh hills are outlined against the distant sky-line; the mountains of lake-land shine radiant as the sun declines; the green plains of the Solway are spread out like a map with fields and dells shaded in; and then come the rugged shores of Scotland, with the bold, stern cliffs of Galloway stretching round so as to almost join hands with the dark bold outlines of the Irish coast.

Here was an ideal spot for the smugglers' home—the island in the centre of the web—and at every point of that wide range of coasts the smuggler might rely on willing help and a hearty welcome, with little to fear from the scattered revenue officers.

As you approach Douglas from the sea, the old town is seen nestling under the south headland, while the new town, bright and cheerful, rises terrace over terrace, on the northern heights. Between the two, and overlooking the whole, stands stately Castle Mona, built by the fourth Duke of Athole, as the chief seat of his princely state. Since the lordship of the island changed hands the castle has been converted into an hotel. But the ancient seat of government was, and still remains at Castletown; and in a convenient nook, divided from Castletown Bay by a narrow isthmus, is Derby Haven, where the Princes of the house of Stanley were wont to land when they visited their island dominions.

Here the gallant Cavalier James built a round tower during the Civil Wars, to protect the landing; and on the adjacent sands of Castletown, races and rustic sports would often be held in honour of the visits of Man's Royalties.

"It may not harmonise well," writes a local historian, with somewhat savage sarcasm, "with the airs which the Cockneys give themselves, to find that the great race about which they all for a time lose their senses, was founded on the peaceful shores of Castletown Bay."

Yes, there was a Derby race, for which the Earl of Derby for the time being gave the prize, about which, no doubt, the Manx wagered and grew excited, although no doubt in a more dignified manner than the Cockneys of a later age, while Epsom was only noted for its Spa and the gay valetudinarians who paraded about its Pump-room.

Dark and grey is Castletown now as of old, among its darker limestone rocks, with its castle still more sombre towering above. This is the once famous Rushen Castle, with scanty remains of Rushen Abbey in the vicinity, the scene of the murder, a justifiable homicide, if you like, of the wicked King Reginald by the good Knight, Ivar. Tradition ascribes the original foundation of the castle to the Danes; and it is said to resemble the Castle of Elsinore, which Hamlet has made famous; and, notwithstanding its modern uses as

a prison, it still retains an air of almost ferocious grandeur. The Abbey is an offshoot of Furness Abbey in Lancashire, the latter being much favoured by certain Kings of Man who willed that their bones should rest among the fraternity of that famous foundation.

Still coasting in the same direction round the island, we reach Port Saint Mary, a little fishing town, and Spanish Head, with its bold precipices three hundred feet or more in height. On Spanish Head, it is said, at that uncertain period known as "ages ago," a vessel was wrecked, the sole survivor being the founder of the famous race of stubbins or tail-less cats. And from what part of the world that lost vessel hailed no man can say, unless it were one of the Spanish Armada.

Beyond Spanish Head lies the island of the Calf of Man, its precipitous sides haunted by sea birds, and its interior peopled by rabbits. Once upon a time, however, there dwelt a hermit on the isle, the ruins of whose hut are still to be seen. This was no religious anchorite vowed to a holy life, but a certain Thomas Bushel—we have met the gentleman before among the mines of Cardiganshire—once a servant of the great philosopher, but less illustrious Chancellor, Lord Bacon. "In obedience to my late lord's philosophical advice," writes Master Bushel, "I resolved to make a perfect experiment upon myself, for the obtaining of a long and healthy life." And to attain this end he lived three years on the Culf of Man, enjoying a parsimonious diet of herbs, oil, mustard, and honey.

Rounding the Calf of Man, we come to a wild romantic coast-line, studded with dark and dangerous reefs of rocks, and after passing Port Erin, once enriched by the trade with Ireland, there is hardly a break in the rocky wall till we reach the harbour of Peel with its famous old ruined castle occupying the whole of the rocky islet dedicated to Saint Patrick. Enclosed within the broken wall of the castle, are the ruins of the Cathedral church and an ancient round tower of the Irish pattern, with the mound of an older castle still. There is no more venerable and hallowed site than this Patrick's Holm all the island round, hallowed and haunted too. For if Saint Patrick himself raised the first beginnings of the church, and early Irish saints are answerable for the round tower, are not the castle ruins haunted by that terrible spectre, the Mough dy Dhoo, or big black dog of Peel? Once a soldier

followed the black dog to his lair. The man returned indeed, but never spoke again, never could reveal the awful secrets of the subterranean world he had visited, and died soon after frozen with terror.

Then there is the ancient crypt beneath the Cathedral, which tradition affirms to have been the prison cell of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, wife of the good Duke Humphrey, accused of witchcraft against King Henry the Sixth; she had made a wax model of the King, it was said, according to the rules of the black art, so that whatever evil she might practise on the image, should be experienced by its representative in the flesh. And so after standing wrapped in a sheet in old Saint Paul's with a candle in her hand to do her penance, the Duchess was handed over to Sir John Stanley to be conveyed to his Kingdom in the Isle of Man. In this desolate prison-house, within the then strong castle of Peel, the unhappy woman passed the rest of her life. An old Manx ballad makes her say:

Full nineteen years in sorrow thus I spent
Without one hour or minute of content.

The actual term of her imprisonment, till death released her, was not so long, but long enough for such a life of misery. The crypt is haunted by the ghost of the unhappy woman, of course; and every night, if one has the courage to listen, she may be heard to ascend the winding stair and to beat against the doorway of her prison to the accompaniment of dismal cries and lamentations.

The existence of the old Cathedral on Patrick's Holm has given rise to the impression that the island should bear the name of Sodor, and that hence is derived the title of the Bishop of Sodor and Man. But this title is a survival from the days when the island was ruled by its Norwegian Kings along with the Hebrides, or the Western Islands; the southernmost of which, "insulæ sodorenses," were united to the Bishopric of Man, owning as metropolitan the Archbishop of Drontheim in Norway.

When Peel is once passed there is nothing of much interest to be met with on the western coast of the island, which from that point seems dull and flat, and sparsely inhabited. But, as we round the Point of Ayre, Ramsey Bay, with its red cliffs, comes in sight, a fine roadstead for ships of any burden when westerly gales are blowing. And there lies the pleasant town of Ramsey, the capital of the northern part of the

island, with its pier and harbour, and its steamers plying to the opposite coast of England. Then comes Maughold Head, named after the saint of that name, a disciple of Saint Patrick. Saint Maughold in his early years had been a wicked Irish Prince, but coming to a due sense of his iniquities through the preaching of Saint Patrick, he determined to renounce the world altogether, and put to sea in a wicker boat—a coracle, no doubt—resigned to go where winds and waves might waft him. These brought him round to the eastern coast of Man, and, choosing the most inaccessible part of the coast for a landing place, he went ashore. Where the saint landed sprang up a fountain, which bursts from the north-west side of the headland, and is still a resort of pilgrims.

Then comes Laxey Bay and village, the latter at the entrance of a pleasant glen surrounded by hills, on the sides of which are to be found many rude monuments of earlier races—in stone and earth mounds—notably a fine cairn, called King Orry's grave, which tradition assigns, and probably with truth, to the bones of the first of the Danish Princes of the island.

There follows a succession of creeks and bays, with a pleasant smiling upland country beyond; fields, villages, hamlets, in pleasant confusion, with quaint church spires and white villas gleaming from wooded slopes, with dark mountain ridges as a background. And this brings us once more to Douglas Bay, and we may take leave of the island

Dear Eilan Vannin,
And thy green hills by the sea,

with that regret which natives and visitors alike experience as its outlines are lost to sight in the hazy distance.

THE SEASIDE IN WINTER.

It would be extremely difficult to find a place where dulness reigns more supreme than in the average seaside health resort during the winter months.

Torquay, Bournemouth, Brighton, and a few other places, are exceptions, it is true, although some people have been known to gently hint that even those lands of crutches and bath-chairs are rather tame at the period of the year when many walks and drives are injudicious—if not impossible.

Singularly enough, there are, as a rule, far less amusements—concerts, lectures,

and the like—in a winter health resort than could be obtained within easy access of the visitor's home. The inhabitants imagine that the natural attractions of their town are quite sufficient to prevent weariness, which—if it may be said without offence—is a great mistake.

Even the prettiest scenery quickly palls, and the appetite is soon cloyed if it is taken in too large a dose; the visitor looks at the "splendid views," and the "magnificent sea frontage," with as great a sense of boredom as that with which he was wont to regard the humble hedge-row in front of his own suburban residence.

But in winter resorts business is kept going; and one can go to church or chapel without being frozen to the marrowbone by a beggarly array of empty seats.

How different is it in those places where the summer season is everything! Many health resorts in the North, for example, are patronised largely by toilers in the busy centres of manufacture; and, as these people rarely think of going to the seaside except in June, July, or August, such places as Blackpool, Southport, and portions of the Isle of Man, are literally "to let" during the winter months. The same state of affairs is, indeed, common in every watering-place which has only the summer season.

In summer, it is sometimes difficult for paterfamilias to meet with the conventional announcement, "Apartments to let;" but in winter this would stare at him from every parlour window in the town, together with the suggestive companion, "Lodgings to let;" which, for obvious reasons, is rarely seen in summer. The general appearance of the houses, too, is not without significance. Windows and blinds agree in that they are dirty; steps and door-plates sadly need cleaning; and, here and there, if the weather be fine, the landlord may be seen standing at the door calmly smoking his pipe, with that air of enjoyment which only inward satisfaction—and good tobacco—can produce. Now he is, very properly, the captain of the ship; but in summer, when business is brisk, he hardly ranks as first mate—in other words, he takes a subsidiary position. Whoever heard of the landlord of a seaside boarding-house? Nobody. The landlady is the responsible person, the ruler of the establishment; the landlord does not get an opportunity of ruling until there is nobody to rule. In summer he is the "Munoz of private life. the

titular lord and master; the carver, house-steward, and humble husband of the occupier of the dingy throne."

Everything about the place is in entire keeping with that deserted appearance of the railway station which strikes one upon arrival. The morning trains from town which were awaited with such interest by a large number of touters from hotels and boarding-houses, with their "comfortable apartments" and "fine views of the sea," are missing. So, too, are the cabmen and the itinerant hangers-on. What they do in winter is a mystery; their summer occupation is decidedly gone; for not two visitors arrive in the course of a week.

The streets are deserted, shops and theatres are closed; and in the direction of the sea everything is changed from what one is accustomed to. There are no suggestions as to its being a "pleasant morning for a sail," not because the gentle hint about the weather would be less in accordance with truth than such observations usually are, but because boats and boatmen are alike missing. The bathing-machines, too, are stranded high and dry, far from the reach of the waves. Bathe! Ugh! The thought almost makes one shudder. Then, even in the first comprehensive survey, one misses the top of the funnel of a steamboat which used to peep over the end of the pier, as if looking for passengers, and the white sails of the yachts, which so pleasantly filled in the background and relieved the monotony. The sands present a new aspect, and one is conscious of the absence of many "common objects of the seaside." Where are Edwin and Angelina? The children who would persist in making their sand-house too near the water? The people who spent most of their time reading yellow-backed novels? The temperance orators and the evangelists? The niggers and the Italian girls? Not to mention Punch and Judy, and a score of others.

This thought inevitably suggests itself as one's eye wanders along the stretch of bare sand, relieved here and there by the flotsam and jetsam of the waves; here a great patch of pretty seaweed; there a bottle, around which a sentimentalist—with vivid recollections of certain harrowing tales from the sea—might weave a thrilling romance, until he discovered that it was but a discarded receptacle for stout.

The pier is deserted, with the exception of the old, familiar figure in the rabbit-hutch at the entrance. Instead of raking

in heaps of pennies, he is now steadily puffing away at a short, black pipe, and reading a newspaper at least a week old.

There is in this neighbourhood only one man whom the "season" does not seem to affect. Need it be said that the man in question is the bluff old tar, whose sole duty seems to consist in tapping the barometer at regular intervals, and in taking the deepest interest in the weather? He is just the same in any seaside place, and at any period of the year.

The churches and chapels, which are uncomfortably crowded in the "season," now present a dismal appearance, owing to the long array of empty pews, and the few people who attend only serve to render the contrast between summer and winter the more glaring. If the inhabitants of a seaside resort attended worship as rarely in winter as they do in summer, the churches and chapels might almost as well be "closed during the winter months," an announcement which one sees in every direction: on the doors of the theatres, of the Aquarium, of one half of the shops; and, just as a small joke in the Law Courts goes a very long way, so the visitor takes a profound interest in shop windows which, at another period of the year, would be passed by without a second glance.

In the summer there is a surfeit of those articles which are only to be found at the seaside; now, very few of them can be seen, and those which are visible can be purchased at a (comparatively) low rate. The prices of all commodities undergo great fluctuations in seaside towns.

After the "season" is over is emphatically the time to buy, so far as cheapness is concerned, for, in the spring, upon everything—from a needle to a pair of sand-shoes—is imposed a sort of Air and Water Tax of twenty-five per cent., which is not taken off until the last of the visitors has departed.

From a pecuniary point, then, during the "season" is not the time to visit a health resort, more especially if the visitor has a horror of meeting all the acquaintances whom he sees every day in the City.

Let such a man choose a summer resort where there is a small resident population, and where the air is not too strong in winter; let him visit it three months after the season is over, and he will have the supreme satisfaction—for those who like this sort of thing—of having the town almost to himself. He can certainly stroll up and down the pier with as much ease and con-

tent as if it belonged to him; he can have his walks and drives with as much solitude as if he were in his own park; he can go anywhere and everywhere without being troubled with the presence of the town acquaintance or the cheap-tripper; and—crowning comfort of all—he can worship at church with almost precisely the same advantage as if he had one built for his own use.

The whole town is, in short, deserted; and the feelings of the average visitor who ventures to go to the seaside in winter are precisely analogous to those experienced when one is cooped up—by rain—in a small hotel in the Lake District. Gloom reigns everywhere, and the dullness is simply intolerable. If a man could put up with it for more than two or three days, he could be tolerably happy under any circumstances, even as the Speaker of a Parliamentary Debating Society, or the Chairman of a haggling Highway Board.

At most seaside resorts, there is but one attraction in winter, and that can only be seen under certain conditions.

It is true that the splendour of the sea during a gale possesses little charm to many; but to most persons it is a magnificent sight. Given a good sea frontage, then high tide, when there is a strong gale blowing inland, is well worth seeing. Well wrapped up, go on the promenade half-an-hour or an hour before high tide.

Above, the sky is dark, perhaps almost black, with here and there a light cloud which serves to intensify the darkness of the others; below, far as the eye can reach, is a mass of seething foam, gloriously white. Every now and then the wind catches the top of one of the large waves, breaks it into spray, and dashes it into your face with a force that makes you blink, and nestle your chin under the collar of your overcoat; while the great billows roll in, break on the shingle, and, rushing up to the promenade, leave behind them a mass of foam, which, however, is soon swept onward by the rising tide.

Already the pier-head is beaten over by the wild, angry sea; but the waters rise higher and higher, till it is almost buried, and one can catch only occasional glimpses of it.

Such a scene is the only inducement to visit most seaside resorts in winter. Of course, in many places, the nature of the climate renders them unsuitable for winter residence. There are some, however, in which this is scarcely the case; yet no

effort is made to attract visitors. The lodging-house keepers—those convenient butts of the humorist—and a few of the shopkeepers are the only inhabitants of the town. As soon as the season is over, these persons have nothing to do but count up the proceeds of the brief period during which they made hay, and await with patience the next year's harvest. They, together with the permanent officials about the place, have no dealings with visitors during the winter months; and they remain in a passive state until the spring. Then everybody bursts into a paroxysm of activity. Painters, paper-hangers, and decorators set to work in good earnest; housekeepers clean down their premises and prepare for the harvest; shops are opened, theatres re-decorated, public improvements effected; and, amongst all the work, the conversation generally turns upon one subject—namely, the prospects of the coming "season."

The true lodging-house keeper, indeed, rarely thinks of anything else when that harvest time is coming round; and thus it happens that, when the reader runs down to his favourite resort for a few days' holiday, he will find things pretty much as he left them, since the desolation of the winter will have given place to the old familiar figures, and to the "common objects of the seaside."

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER VIII. HOLM.

ONE morning, ten days later, Celia Darrell was standing at her window in Holm Lodge, looking out westward. Half the view was still veiled by the mists of the autumn morning; but the sun was slowly winning his way, laying long gold rays across the fields, touching the groups of great beeches and the oaks which were just taking a tint of brown on their greenness, adding colour to the varying autumn colours, and making a world of lovely light and shadow, except on the southward slope of the hill, where the "sable, silent, solemn forest" lay a dark mass, and seemed impenetrable even by sunshine. Among the trees, a mile or two away, the light had just touched the white spire of

Holm Church; beyond it more woods and rich green slopes, and then the mist that hid the distant hills.

Celia stood and looked out at this view with a faint, lazy smile. Most of the land she could see belonged to Paul Romaine, and would very soon belong to her; he wanted the marriage to come off as soon as possible, and she, as she smilingly told her aunt, saw no reason for any delay. The tiresome business about Vincent had given her a certain dislike to Wookborough, and also to any continued dependence on her aunt, who, in her opinion, had not been entirely nice about that. The prospect of a good fortune and perfect liberty was very agreeable; and Paul, the necessary drawback to these things, was not nearly so bad as such an appendage might have been. Celia considered the case of a friend of hers who had married, for the same reasons, a vulgar cotton-spinner of fifty. Of course she ruled him, but she was ashamed of him; his ignorances were terrible. Now Paul might be odd; he might pass as a muff, even, among Celia's sort of men; but he was young, good-looking, and a gentleman. This was a nicer sort of thing to rule than the other. Celia was quite satisfied. She was also proud of her own good sense, and, by this time, had laughed herself out of any lingering trouble about Vincent, though she often caught herself thinking of him. One cannot have everything in this world, she thought very justly; some advantages must be given up for the sake of others. A little more of Vincent would have been dangerous, it was true; she was beginning to understand what love might be—a thing to upset all calculations. But he was gone; that painful little excitement had passed away, and, just as he had prophesied, she had laughed and played tennis all the week with other people.

Now she had come with her uncle and aunt to Holm; and Paul was at Red Towers. He had travelled with them, and they had all arrived late last night. It was amusing to come back to the same country she had visited last autumn, and to look at it with such different eyes. Then, she had been rather tired and bored with everything, though she did not show it much; now, she was quite prepared to be pleased. She remembered Colonel Ward rather vaguely, as an old bore; he was Paul's best friend, and must be cultivated; especially as her aunt said he was rich, and might leave Paul his money. Paul's

house, too, was now a matter of critical interest.

Celia presently went downstairs, in a cheerful, practical state of mind, and found her uncle, the Canon, enjoying his "villeggiatura" on the stone steps in front of the little house, wearing a straw hat and reading a novel. Below lay the tennis ground in dewy shadow; below that, the brilliant and varied colour of a hedge of dahlias; then a sort of little glen, all grass and oak trees; and then the great wood. Altogether it was a peaceful and pleasant retreat. Celia wished her uncle good-morning, and stood beside him on the steps; he looked up from his book benevolently.

"Well, Celia!" he said, "are you thinking, 'I am monarch of all I survey!' We quite acknowledge it, your aunt and I—only don't turn us out of our house. Holm will have new charms when you are settled here."

"Then I hope you mean to be here more than once a year," said Celia, smiling. "I have no taste for solitude. I shall want you dreadfully."

"Don't let Paul hear that," said the Canon. "He wants nobody but you."

"Paul is very young," said Celia.

"Just the same age, are you not?"

"That means nothing."

"By-the-by, is he coming to breakfast?"

"No. Colonel Ward wanted him. He is coming here afterwards."

"Rather ill-advised of the worthy Colonel. Very funny, Paul's affection for that old fellow," said Canon Percival thoughtfully. "I was quite uneasy, at one time: I thought he would turn Paul into as great an oddity as himself. I assure you, Celia, that if Colonel Ward had had his way, Paul would have spent his whole time at Red Towers, loitering about with him and his dogs. Wouldn't even have gone to college. Most absurd, and very wrong; quite contrary to his father's wishes. Well, you know, the Colonel doesn't like me, simply because I set my face against all this nonsense of keeping the boy shut up, away from other young men. It was my duty, as Paul's guardian. Of course, I had no more power than Colonel Ward; but I had your aunt on my side. That was a great thing."

"Aunt Flo can do anything with the old Colonel, can't she?"

"So she thinks. I don't know; I hope so—for if he can give us any trouble, you may be sure that he will. I suspect he

does not approve of this marriage. I wrote him a long letter about it the other day. I thought it was the proper thing to do. He has not vouchsafed me an answer."

"But Paul is his own master now," suggested Celia.

"Yes, yes, very true. But the Colonel can make himself troublesome. He has been mixed up so much, do you see, with the management of the property."

"Oh, I don't think he will do much harm. Now breakfast is ready. Here are Aunt Flo and Toto coming to call us."

Paul had been having his breakfast with Colonel Ward in the dark low dining-room at the Cottage, where the dogs sat up all round and waited for their turn. The Colonel's household arrangements were of the simplest kind; they were not unlike those of Dr. Riccabocca, only if possible simpler still, the only servant who lived in the house with him being a straight and correct young man named Bartholomew, commonly called Barty, who had been a soldier, and might have been a Frenchman, from his genius as cook, valet, housemaid, and gardener. Not that these talents were in requisition every day. An old woman, who lived on the common—ugly, clever, and respectable—was nominally Colonel Ward's housekeeper, and spent most of her time at the Cottage. Nothing could be plainer than the little old-fashioned rooms, with their well-worn furniture, where the six dogs lay in a row before the fire in winter, and in their favourite corners in summer. They were all one family; the Colonel's breed of Clumber spaniels was well known in that part of the world.

The uninitiated were wont to see nothing at first but a heap of white, curly, satiny backs and legs, more or less varied with golden-brown, half-a-dozen white faces, more or less mild, affectionate, melancholy, with drooping ears, long and fringed, and eyes, light golden brown, so touching in their wistful gaze that they might have melted the stoniest heart. This collective impression was all nonsense, and nothing enraged Colonel Ward so much as to hear it put into words.

They were very happy dogs, and their characters were just as varied as those of a family of children. Besides, they were by no means equal in beauty, or in the appearance of good breeding, though all equally well-bred. Dick and Di, the father and mother of the flock, were the perfection of Clumber beauty, carrying the

"ahilling mark" on their heads which stamps the breed. Two of the puppies—Jack and Jess—also bore this distinction; but Punch and Judy were unfortunately and unaccountably without it.

The Colonel was ashamed of them, and so was Barty; but Mrs. Perks, the house-keeper, gave it as her opinion that they were much happier without it. Certain it is that they were the most cheerful of the party, and full of careless impertinence, leaving dignity to their father and mother, and melancholy to their more distinguished brother and sister, who, especially Jess, were of all young dogs the saddest. These dogs seemed keenly to feel the responsibilities of their position; they never did anything wrong, and their greatness weighed upon them. But the flower of the family was no doubt Di; she had in consequence the best of everything, and none of her companions dreamed of being jealous, or of disputing her pre-eminence. The other dogs were sometimes left at home, or shut up out of the way. Di was her master's dearest friend; she slept in his room, and he was never seen without her. The thick white satin of her coat, with its stiff curl, was perfection; her marks were the right shade of brown; her eyes with their golden-tinted depths were full of soul and tenderness. Dick was very handsome too, but he was a heavy, uninteresting dog compared with Di. He knew this, no doubt; he admired her loyally, like a gentleman, and did not resent their master's favouritism, but contented himself with violently snubbing the pretentious Punch, and generally setting a dignified example to the puppies.

Paul and the Colonel and this family had breakfast very comfortably together, Paul's little Scamp having been left at home; the Clumbers were ready to play with him out-of-doors, but did not care for his company in their own dining-room, where each had its own place, Di perched on a footstool at her master's right hand. Di had a charmingly high-bred way of pretending not to be hungry, and playing with her food: the puppies never could imitate this, and Dick only tried to seem indifferent, betraying his anxiety in his eyes. Punch and Judy sometimes had to be turned out of the room; then Di tossed her head scornfully, and played more than ever.

Colonel Ward was not very cheerful that morning; he was silent and dull. Without the delightful behaviour of the dogs, and

the serene intensity of happiness which shone in the face of Paul, the meal would have been a dismal one.

The Colonel's mind, in fact, was divided against itself. He wanted to rejoice with his friends—he was a solitary man, and had few other friends—but he could not yet be reconciled to Paul's marrying Miss Darrell. Besides, there was the danger of inconsistency, for he remembered all that he had said to Paul on the subject, and supposed Paul must remember it too, perhaps resent it; in this he was mistaken. Altogether, he was not comfortable in his mind, and rather avoided the subject till breakfast was nearly over. He had quite meant to have a very serious and interesting talk with Paul, and had asked him to breakfast with this in view; but Paul gave signs of being too frivolously happy for any sort of business conversation.

The poor Colonel felt out of tune with his surroundings. At last he began:

"I suppose your engagement is no longer a secret?"

"You are right," the young man answered. "Everybody may know now."

"Percival thought it necessary to write me a grand letter about it the other day," said the Colonel. As he spoke, he threw Di a scrap of toast, and smiled at her frolics in receiving it.

Small yelps of impatience came from Punch and Judy, and the other puppies beat the floor with their tails. Dick alone lay motionless, looking at his master, with feelings too deep for expression.

After a pause the Colonel went on:

"I didn't answer his letter."

"Why not?" said Paul.

"What was I to say? He told me nothing that I did not know before. His own gratification and Mrs. Percival's—was there any need for describing that? He wanted me to write a history about mine—rather too much to expect, as any other man would have felt. However, it is Percival all over—ignoring any view but his own. Can't turn into a humbug, Paul, even to please you, or Mrs. Percival either."

"We don't want you to do that," said Paul. "I dare say Canon Percival's letter did not want an answer. He never said anything to me about it. It doesn't matter; you will be civil to them now."

"I suppose I must. Not ask them here?—I can't do that. Neither Mrs. Percival nor Miss Darrell would care to

come to tea in a kennel, for instance," said the Colonel, looking sharply round at his dog-family.

"You had better ask them, and hear what they say," said Paul. "They are very fond of dogs."

He felt quietly convinced that the dear old Colonel was dying to make himself as agreeable as possible to the ladies, who certainly were quite ready to be friendly with him. His holding aloof was the one thing that troubled Paul at this time, and he was sure that the prejudice would only be conquered by further acquaintance with Celia. He thought that the whole thing was to be traced to the Colonel's dislike of Canon Percival, a very old story. He could not dislike Celia herself; that idea was so ridiculous as to be impossible: and her want of fortune could never be a real objection to so unworldly a mind as the Colonel's.

Mrs. Percival was his old love, the object of his deepest admiration; he therefore certainly had no right to be surprised if her niece proved as attractive as herself.

"What are you going to do this morning?" asked Colonel Ward, still rather grumpily.

"I am going to fetch Mrs. Percival and Miss Darrell, and we are going all over the house, and so on, to see what alterations will be wanted."

"Alterations!"

"Now, Colonel, if you were going to be married, you would want alterations here."

"And my landlord would object, I dare say. Well, Paul, a guardian is a more important person than a landlord. One has only his own property to think about; the other has somebody else's. And that's a serious affair, when the somebody is a foolish young fellow in love."

"Come along, then, and give us your advice," said Paul. "Come with me now, or meet us at the house."

"No, my lad; I'll do neither one thing nor the other. You are of age; you must manage your own affairs."

"Oh yes, you must come," said Paul. "You know the house better than anybody. I shall tell them you are coming."

"No, I'm not coming," the Colonel said.

He went out with Paul to the gate, and watched him as he rushed off along the sandy road towards Holm Lodge. The sun was shining on its red chimneys, from which faint blue wreaths of smoke were stealing; up here on the high ground the air was clear and fresh, though a morning mist still lingered in the valleys; the hills lay blue and purple against the paler sky. Down on the left lay the beautiful varied woods that surrounded Red Towers, changing gradually into the pine-woods below Holm Lodge; to the right, the common, with its yellow dress of faded bracken, was bounded by larger and older pine-woods still. All the air was full of their scent, and there was perfect stillness everywhere. If the wild estate of Red Towers had especially prepared itself to receive its new mistress, it could not have done so to more advantage.

Colonel Ward stood and watched the slight figure of the young Squire, striding off in happy haste to meet his love, the only living thing to be seen in the bright lonely landscape. Till the young man had disappeared round the turn of the road, his old friend stood looking. Then he said aloud, "It's all nonsense. The girl can't be good enough for him"; and smote hard two or three times with his stick on the stones at the gate. This was the dogs' signal; they came rushing out of the house in a body, and their master started off at once for a walk with them, up the hill, under the wild banks, where one or two great rugged firs overhung the road, past the deeply-shaded gate of Red Towers, up the road beyond, which ran brown and damp through the very middle of the dark tall wood, on its way to higher hills and wilder commons, and great shining views stretching away to the sea.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER VIII. CHECK!

WHEN anything like that which Fred had in hand is being done, we think of its advantages, but when it is done, of its consequences. Fred walked away from the bank in greater trepidation than he had felt upon entering it. The reaction after the nervous excitement, in which he had altered the cheque and then hurried, as though pursued, from his rooms through the courts and streets to the bank, had no doubt something to do with the depression in which he now slowly retraced his steps; but most of it was due to the sudden thought of the possible consequences of what he had done. What if Gower's father recovered? Or, if that was all but impossible, what if Gower himself should turn upon him, expose him, prosecute him upon discovering that the money was used to ransom, not his own letters, but Fred's? For, in his present mood, Fred somehow did not think it so transparently clear that it was solely in Gower's interest that he had done this thing. At any rate, there might be some difficulty in making Gower see the matter in that light. But after all, if the worst came to the worst, he had Gower's letters as security. He could and would keep them, and use them, if necessary, for self-protection. The threat of returning them to Pratt would bring to his knees Gower's father, if he recovered, or Gower himself, if he turned nasty about the cheque.

Even the sense of this security, however, failed to restore Fred's equanimity. He walked back slowly and gloomily, oppressed

with the sense that he had put himself in the power of the law. The sight of a policeman on his beat gave him a strange sensation, such as a man sold into sudden slavery must have felt at sight of an overseer upon his rounds. On the other hand, when little Rennie, upon whom he would have looked down half-an-hour since from an infinite height, stopped to speak to him, he felt almost grateful, as for an unlooked-for act of friendliness. Indeed, he accepted cordially the little man's invitation to view a new boat of which Rennie was to be coxswain, and felt rehabilitated, as it were, in his own respect by a walk through the streets in such company.

He stayed with Rennie as long as he could, enjoying the mild little man's deference, as the starving man enjoys the humblest fare, and it was close upon the appointed hour when he hurried back to receive Pratt. But Pratt was in his rooms to receive him. Fred in his nervous flurry had left his doors open, and Pratt, having knocked to no purpose, had taken the liberty of walking in. He apologised for it, however, to Fred's surprise, and was altogether in a milder and sweeter temper than that of an hour since.

"I comed in only jest this moment," he said. "I thought the young gen'lemen were lookin' queer-like at me, and might be smellin' a rat maybe, as they passed up and down, so I took th' lib'ty to henter jest as I heeard your step on the stairs, not knowin' as it were yours."

He looked so flustered that it struck Fred he must have spent the hour in a public-house, where whisky had softened his manners and repressed their savagery. This mollified mood must by all means be taken advantage of, and Fred, therefore, was extremely civil.

"Sit down; sit down, Mr. Pratt. You were quite right to come in, and, indeed, I left the doors open that you might not be kept waiting outside, if I happened to be a few minutes late, as I feared I should. It's not so easy to scrape fifty pounds together in an hour; but I've done it, Mr. Pratt, and here you are!" Fred cried triumphantly. He counted down fifty pounds in notes and gold as he spoke, and then, wrapping the gold in the notes, he held out his hand for the letters.

"How much did you say?" asked Pratt, with a greedy eye on the bundle.

"Fifty pounds, Mr. Pratt, in Bank of England notes and gold," Fred replied with the meritorious air of having done wondrously.

But Pratt shook his head.

"Sixty pounds, Mr. Beresford. Sixty pounds is the figure, and a low figure too."

"Sixty pounds!" cried Fred aghast, sinking into a chair. "Then I must take my chance." So saying he opened the parcel and put back slowly, first the gold, and then the notes into his purse.

"Hang the ten pounds!" Mr. Pratt cried suddenly and genially. "What's ten pounds between me and you? Give us the fifty pounds, and here you are," pulling out Fred's letters from his breast pocket. Fred held out his hand for the letters, but Pratt said with a cunning and odious leer:

"It's your lead, my boy. Honour bright; down with your ace, and, s'help me, I trump it with this," holding up the packet of letters impudently.

Fred counted down the money once more and pushed it towards Pratt, who in return handed over the packet at once.

"There's eleven on 'em; you can look em over, while I count the flimsies."

Fred looked over the letters deliberately and found them all right. Glancing up suddenly at the close of his examination, he found Pratt grinning with an insupportably odious expression of low triumph in his repulsive face. Stepping quickly to the door he opened it and the one outside it, then returning, he seized Pratt by the collar, dragged him along to the top of the stairs, and with one vigorous kick, sent him from the top to the bottom. Pratt picked himself up quickly, and shouted back at the top of his voice, just as Fred was re-entering his rooms:

"I'll have the law of you, you thief, for druggin' and robbin' me of them letters! You wouldn't touch me with the tongs, you wouldn't! You wouldn't

pick my pockets of your own letters, let alone another gent's! An' them all the time in your deak, you robber!"

Fred, having shut both doors sharply behind him, hurried back, white and trembling, to his desk.

Yes, Gower's letters were gone! In his nervous flurry and excitement he had left both desk and doors open behind him when he had hastened out with the altered cheque to the bank. Pratt must have been for some time in his rooms, rummaging amongst his papers, which accounted for his flustered look and his excessive protestations of having preceded Fred by but a minute into the rooms.

In truth, Pratt, having arrived before his time, finding the rooms open and empty, began a search for the letters forthwith. His mind was full of his loss; and, though he did not now think that Fred had picked his pocket—for why, then, should he have left his own letters behind?—he suspected that the lost packet had fallen out of his pocket while he was helplessly drunk, and had been found on the floor by Fred upon his return to the rooms. Having this idea in his mind Pratt went straight to the open deak, which he would probably have rummaged in any case, and came upon the packet after a short search. He still believed that Fred had merely found the packet on the floor—partly because this, his own bright idea, had led him to its recovery—and his taunting Fred with having picked his pocket was only a furious gibe, hurled back as the first missile that came to hand.

Fred sat down, crushed under a sense, not only of defeat, but of disaster. What, now, had he to show Gower for his forgery? Or, if he or his father should, by any chance, threaten exposure and prosecution, where now was his hostage? After all, though, this was in the last degree improbable, Fred tried to comfort himself by thinking. Gower's father was dead, or dying, and Gower himself in the first flush of his joy upon succeeding to a splendid property, was little likely to make a fuss about eighty pounds.

While Fred was trying to get what comfort he could out of such reflections, this telegram came to upset them:

"From A. Gower, Fernfield, Hawthornden.

"Father much better—will be all right soon—doctor a duffer—had a fellow from London—shall write to-night."

"What an infernal mess!" Fred cried

aloud with a stamp, as he flung the telegram from him. "This wretched old curmudgeon gets better, looks into his accounts—he is always looking into his accounts—discovers the discrepancy, has the forged cheque returned to him, and sees it endorsed by me." What on earth was to be done? Nothing; he could think of nothing. There was now no possibility of intercepting the cheque, even if Fred could have got together the money to redeem it; and old Gower was the last man in the world to believe that the amount of the cheque was altered to the sum needed to buy up his son's compromising letters, when those letters were never bought up at all. That infamous scoundrel, Pratt, was not likely to let the grass grow under his feet in hunting down so rich a prey; and old Gower would probably discover Fred's fraud, just while he was writhing in Pratt's extortionate grasp. How then persuade him that the letters, which would cost him probably some thousands of pounds, had been bought up for eighty pounds, and subsequently stolen? The whole story, put in any way, was outrageously improbable—incredible in fact.

Fred had an ugly hour wondering what devil possessed him to do this thing, and cursing his unlucky stars. It was all ill-luck; and of all the people concerned in the transaction—Pratt and his daughter, Gower and his unconscionable old curmudgeon of a father, who came back to life so inconveniently; and, lastly, the wretched Fred himself—no one was so little to blame as this unfortunate victim of circumstances. This Fred sincerely believed; but the consciousness that his sufferings were vicarious hardly mitigated them. He walked up and down his room trying to see a way out of this mess, and at last dashed forth to mix among other fellows, go on some spree, have a roaring night of it, and so drown misery for a day.

But care, so killed, rises again next morning double-headed as the hydra, and Fred opened Gower's letter in bed with the wretchedest forebodings.

"DEAR BERESFORD,—I'm sorry I made such a fuss to you about the Governor, who is nearly all right again, and is good for twenty years yet. It was all that thundering idiot of a doctor, Diggle—you remember him—the ass! He said he hadn't an hour to live, so they wired for a London big-wig, who came down and pocketed a hundred guineas for curing a

stomach-ache! I never knew such a beastly swindle altogether. However, I can go to you now anyway; that's one good thing. I shall start to-morrow, and reach Hammersley nearly as soon as yourself, as well as I can make out from 'Bradshaw.' I can tell you I shall be glad enough to get out of ear-shot of the Gov., who blazes away at me all day long about my idleness and extravagance. He's bad enough at best of times, as you know, but a touch of the gout makes a mad-man of him, though I believe he would rather have gone on with the gout for life than have had to pay a hundred guineas for nothing. I'm hanged, too, if he doesn't put the whole thing—gout, cheque, and all—down to me. My worrying him for money, he says, brought on the attack! I hope, by the way, you've managed to scrape through your little difficulty. I wish I could have sent you more, but the Gov. rages like a bear robbed of its whelps at the mere mention of money. We can have it all out to-morrow evening over a pipe, old fellow. Till then, good bye, and believe me ever yours, AUGUSTUS GOWER."

This letter, with its assurance of the old man's recovery and its complaints of his temper, stinginess, and unreasonable exasperation at his son's extravagance, was not, it may be imagined, cheerful reading for Fred in his present mood. But, besides all this, the "cocky" tone of the letter had a rasping effect on Fred's tart temper. Was this the parasitic Gower? It seemed to Fred in reading the letter that their relations were reversed in the writer's opinion—Gower taking Fred's place as patron. Some part of this impression arose from the soreness of Fred's present temper, but much of it had a real foundation. Gower had come to realise his prospective greatness in those few hours between the telegram's reaching him and his reaching home, and Fred's sudden subservience had especially helped him to realise it. When a weak-minded youth, like Gower, finds himself suddenly looked up to by a man to whom he had himself hitherto looked up, he is pretty sure to lose his head a little. You will sometimes see in a farmyard a cockerel chased and chastened daily by an old cock, till, at last at bay, it turns in a happy hour upon its tormentor to find itself to its amazement more than his match. Henceforth the old cock has a harassed time of it, and hardly dares crow above his breath, in a solilo-

quy,] under a hedge. Gower in another way had made a similar discovery, and was likely to make a similar use of it.

Of this, his letter made Fred conscious at the moment when he was miserably conscious also of being at Gower's mercy. Altogether, the letter, if it had been written designedly to intensify the remorse and misery of Fred's thoughts, could not have answered its purpose more poignantly. He lay tossing frenziedly, making all the desperate resolutions of weakness. He would cut his throat; he would cut the country; he would go to America, Africa, Australia; he would enlist; he would "go under" for good somehow and somewhere. If only he could first make a hecatomb of Dredge, Pratt, and that infernal Delilah, his daughter! It was to the diabolical wickedness of these wretches that all his troubles were due. This Fred believed sincerely, for he was the last man to look behind secondary causes for these troubles, if he was likely to see there misdeeds of his own.

Finding rest in bed at the passive mercy of such thought insupportable, he sprang up, dressed himself, and proceeded to breakfast chiefly on a brandy and soda. He had hardly poured himself out a glass of brandy, when Dredge appeared by appointment.

"Oh, it's you," cried Fred, furious at sight of the original source of all his trouble, as he considered him. Fred certainly was not "wagging his tail" this time, but showing his teeth rather with an unexpected savageness, which had an excellent effect upon our feline friend. Dredge was one of those servile, insolent creatures, whom civility makes uncivil, and incivility civil.

"Yes, it's me," he answered, amazed and subdued. "What's up now?"

Fred was not slow to perceive the advantage this hectoring manner gave him.

"You've come for that money?"

"Yes," replied Dredge, blinking his furtive eyes perplexedly.

"Then you may go to h—— for it, or to Pratt. What did you set him on me for?" Fred snapped savagely.

"I?" stammered Dredge.

"Yes, you."

"I don't know what you mean."

"You know very well what I mean. You told him I had money, and that now was the time to put on the screw with those letters."

"I never said a single word— Phew!" whistled Dredge, pulling himself up suddenly, as a new light broke upon him. "Did he tell you I set you for him?" speaking as though he were a pointer setting a partridge.

"He let it out when he was drunk."

"It was that infernal little daughter of his," rejoined Dredge, and he proceeded to use extraordinarily strong language about that mercenary young person. "Had she letters of yours?" he asked presently, after a round volley of such abuse. But Fred paced up and down the room without paying the least heed to the question. He was not acting this fury, yet he felt through it all that it was paying better with Dredge than any other manner would have done.

"The little demon!" continued Dredge, after a pause. "A love-letter is just a letter of credit to her. How much had you to fork out?"

"I had to pay what you told him to ask me—fifty pounds—and you may just go to him for it now: I haven't got it."

"Now, look here, Beresford; that's all gas, and you know it's gas. You'll just have to pay up, or burst up. I have only to go——"

"You can't ruin me worse than I've ruined myself to get you that money," Fred roared, turning upon Dredge with such fierceness that he recoiled a step. Fred's despair—and he really was desperate—did not prevent his seeing its excellent effect upon Dredge; that amazed youth was flung at once upon his haunches by so sudden a pull-up. After blinking blankly for a little at Fred, and assuring himself that he was really in fierce earnest, he turned his thoughts in a more profitable direction.

"Well, I suppose I may have my own money, if I can make that scoundrel Pratt disgorge?" he said sullenly.

Fred stopped dead in his to-and-fro pacing, which he had resumed, and turned to Dredge eagerly.

"Can you put on the screw there?" he asked excitedly.

"Rather!"

Fred sat down to compose himself, and said, after a few seconds, as coolly as he could:

"He has another fellow's letters, for which I think I could get you another fifty pounds."

"Whose?"

"Gower's."

"That fellow! He's good for one hundred pounds, at least. Eh?"

"Fifty pounds, anyway," Fred replied carelessly, fearful of betraying his own eager interest in the matter.

But Dredge saw at once that his interest in the matter was, for some reason, extraordinary.

"You'll bear a hand?" he said, not interrogatively, but assuredly. "Pratt's such a slippery customer, that he'd swear he hadn't got either your money or Gower's letters, if I hadn't you to put in the box."

Fred assented eagerly. He was only too glad to "bear a hand." Apart from his desperate desire to do something, and his vindictive longing to see Pratt humiliated, he could not endure a moment's needless suspense about the recovery of Gower's letters—the recovery, that is, of his hold over Gower and his father, and of his one certain security against exposure and prosecution.

When, therefore, they found that Pratt had started that morning for London, and when Dredge had got from his daughter his address there—under the pretext of wishing to write to him—Fred eagerly suggested giving him chase at once, offering to pay all the expenses of the pursuit.

Thus it happened that his father received from Fred this telegram:—"Have to go to town on business. Shall write to-night. Gower will be with you to-day. Pray apologise and explain."

On Monday morning both his father and Gower received mysterious letters from him, announcing his detention still in London, due, as he said to his father, to a business matter which he could not explain properly by letter; but to Gower he hinted that it was his business which took him to town, and there engrossed and detained him. He would tell him all about it only when he had succeeded, as he hoped soon to succeed, in settling it satisfactorily.

Meanwhile, however, Gower, not having the least suspicion what the business was at which Fred hinted, was perfectly resigned to his absence, when the blank was filled by his sister.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE PUSS IN BOOTS LEGEND.

IN or about the year 1550 there was published in Venice a book, now very scarce, written in the style which, since the

tales and gossip of the bazaars and harems were collected in "the book of the thousand nights and one night," has been so dear to "snappers-up of unconsidered" literary "trifles." The book is known as "*Tredecì Piacevoli Notti*," or, "Thirteen Humorous Nights Entertainment," and it is understood to have been written by one Straparola da Caravaggio. It would be safer perhaps, to say collected, rather than written, as many of the stories, which are supposed to have been told at a palace near Milan, by "ten ladies and two youths" who, at the invitation of a certain Princess, met to enjoy the cool air outside the city walls, were borrowed from other writers, or were popular fairy tales and legends which, perhaps for centuries before, had been, as it were, floating in the air.

In the first story of the Eleventh Night of Straparola's book appears the earliest European version of the familiar "Puss," who, it should be observed, was not then "in boots." The scene is laid in Bohemia, and the youngest son of the deceased miller and owner of the celebrated cat, a female cat in this instance, is Florentine, the lucky. The cat is nameless. Before taking his master into the King's presence, the cat induces him to bathe, and then, as a proof of the tender care he bestows on him, proceeds to lick him clean, an ingenious, though somewhat strange device, which appears in no other version of the story.

In the "*Pentamerone*," a book of ten stories by Basile, written in the Neapolitan dialect in 1635 and published at Naples in 1674, is found another version, which is named after the hero, who is called by the cat, "*Gaglioso*." As in Straparola's story, so in Basile's, the cat is unnamed and unbooted. In neither does the Ogre appear, and this fact tends to show that the story was known in Europe before the thirteenth century, with such tales as "*Cinderella*," "*Little Red Riding Hood*," or "*The Sleeping Beauty*," as Ogres were certainly not introduced as supernatural elements into the nursery before Marco Polo wrote of them as a fierce Tartar race. The name "Ogre" became a terror throughout Europe, and was then used by the mothers and nurses of Brittany as a means of terrifying their own children or those consigned to their care; and they often introduced the terrible Ogre in their fairy tales, in order to form a new object of terror, or to take the place of men changed into wolves, which was the old one.

The conclusion of Basile's version is singular, and perhaps somewhat cynical. When Gaglioso has married the Princess, he thanks the cat and showers honours on him; when he dies, he promises that a golden coffin shall be made and a grand tomb built for him. A few days later the cat pretends death; upon which his ungrateful master orders him to be thrown out of the window into the street. The cat then jumps up, and, after stontly reproaching Gaglioso, goes abroad shouting to all men the story of his impostor master. It is probable that the story was known in France many years before the translation of Straparola's book, which was published as "*Les Faccieuses Nuictz*," in 1560; and it is certain that Charles Perrault, ex-Secretary of Fine Arts and Public Buildings to the great Colbert, at the age of fifty, began to collect—perhaps amplify and embellish, and commit to paper for the amusement of his son—traditions and stories with which mothers and nurses amused their children. These manuscript stories were circulated in Paris to a great extent; but there is some doubt as to whether they would ever have been published, had not Mademoiselle Lh  ritier de Villaudon, encouraged by Perrault's success in manuscript, published in 1696 a book of stories of far inferior merit.

"Mother Goose's Tales, or Stories of Past Ages with Morals"—"*Contes de ma m  re Loye : Histoires et contes du temps pass   avec des Moralitez*"—was published the year after; and, although stated to be by P. Darmancourt, the son of Charles Perrault, all Paris knew that the real editor of the eight fairy tales was no other than Charles Perrault, the author of works on Fine Arts and History, and the originator of that fierce controversy which raged on the publication of the "*Parall  les des Anciens et des Modernes*," which lasted so long, and brought out the argumentative powers of such men as Racine, Boileau, and Lafontaine.

The truth was that Perrault, at the age of sixty-eight, was ashamed to publish in his own name so frivolous a work.

The dull, long novels, the serious, moral books, which, strange as it may seem, were regarded as fashionable towards the close of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, were soon superseded by fairy tales, and many were the imitators of Perrault—such as Countess d'Aulnoy, Madame Murat, and Mademoiselle de la Force—but, whenever Charles Perrault's name

is remembered, it will not be for his "History of the Illustrious Men of France," or for the work done as Colbert's secretary, but as the collector and writer of those old fairy tales—"the best of the sort that have been given to the world, simple, written in a naive and familiar style, and having the appearance of implicit belief on the part of the relater," says Planch  —which are known as "The Tales of Mother Goose."

The book is a favourite one with collectors, and, when found, it is generally very finely bound, and comes from a famous library.

Some years ago, at the Bertin sale in Paris, the finest known copy, bound in light-blue morocco by Trautz, brought forty pounds; at the present time double that price would not be thought too dear for such a treasure. It was dedicated to Mademoiselle Elizabeth Charlotte d'Orleans, sister of Philippe, Duke of Chartres and Orleans, who had not quite attained the age of twenty.

In Perrault's version of "Puss in Boots," we find, for the first time, that the cat asks for a pair of boots and a sack; this is, no doubt, a conceit of Perrault's, in order to make the cat appear more human. The story of the Ogre, here introduced for the first time, had, no doubt, already been tacked on to the end of the story by nurses and mothers, and formed an integral part of it when Perrault first heard it. The cat, as in the other versions of it, has no name, but his master is known as the Marquis of Carabas. It is somewhat curious that "Moralit  s," or morals, such as are to this day appended to fables, seem to have entirely disappeared in English versions of fairy tales, although all the early writers deduce some moral, more or less good, often expressed in verse, from the fairy story they relate. The questionable moral with which Perrault adorns his tale of "*Le Chat Bott  *," has been gracefully done into English by Planch  :

Be the advantage n'er so great
Of owning a superb estate,
From sire to son descended,
Young men oft find on industry,
Combined with ingenuity,
They'd better have depended.

It is open to grave doubts, however, whether Puss in Boots can in any light be looked upon as a moral story, as both master and cat are mere adventurers and impostors.

There are some strangely wrought people

in the world who are for ever trying to discover some hidden meaning, either religious or political, in our most popular old books and simplest stories. Fairy tales have certainly not escaped. We have heard that the sheep lost by Little Bo Peep were symbolical of the lost tribes of Israel; and it is recorded seriously, that, in Perrault's tale, which he certainly did not invent, "the Marquis de Carabas was intended as a portrait of some particular nobleman of the time of Louis the Fourteenth; and, therefore, the usurpation of the castle and property of the Ogre might be an allusion to the indelicate seizure by d'Aubigné of the domains of a Protestant exile, in consequence of the religious persecutions at the end of the seventeenth century, in which case the cat would be Madame de Maintenon."

One more version of the story should not be forgotten, as it is in a curious dramatic form. It is in German, and is called "Der gestiefelter Kater," a children's play with prologue, three acts, and epilogue by Ludwig Tieck, and in it the adventures of Gottlieb and Hinze, as the hero and cat are respectively known are set forth very amusingly, but many characters quite foreign to the story are introduced.

As a pantomime, the story has often been used in England, frequently so altered and mingled with other fairy tales as to be almost unrecognisable. It has remained for Mr. E. L. Blanchard to adapt Perrault's story in its pure form for pantomime purposes.

So long ago as 1818, a comic romance, founded on a fairy tale, interspersed with pantomimic incidents, entitled the "Marquis of Carabas, or Puss in Boots," was produced at Covent Garden Theatre with such players as Blanchard, Liston, Emery, Mrs. Davenport, and Miss Foote, whilst "Puss," under the name of the "Fairy Grimalkin," was taken by the great "Grimaldi."

A CYMRIC COURTSHIP.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS. PART III.

THE year wore on towards its close, as years will, even when one is so sick at heart that the days and nights seem interminable. After the wet November came snow, and a bright, crisp frost. This kind of weather on the Welsh hills means plenty to do with the sheep and cows, and Mary of Ynysau was very busy both before and after Christmas. She had never before

been known to take work amiss—the more there was to do, as a rule, the merrier she could be; but this winter she went about the cow-house and the dairy mechanically and wearily, as if the familiar occupation had grown burdensome and stale; there was no inducement to be brisk, no occasion to calculate the hours, for, when the work was finished, there would be nothing left to do but to go to bed and to lie there thinking over the changes which so short a time had wrought.

She had not expected that John the schoolmaster would acquiesce so readily in his banishment from Ynysau. She had spoken out her displeasure and she had expected him to ask forgiveness, if not on the spot, at least after mature consideration; and she had been prepared to forgive—but, alas! her wooer seemed to have turned over a new leaf in his ways as easily as if life had been a spelling-book, whereas she clung to the past with a tenacity which astonished herself, and which every day made her load of trouble more galling to bear.

She lost her bright looks, and her free, cheerful ways left her; and as it was impossible for her to keep her love affairs a secret, her friends and neighbours soon put two and two together, and made matters worse by pitying her. Of course, she refused to admit that she was fretting, but cause and effect were quite patent to every one, for John Morgan had not only left off walking with her to chapel, but had positively taken to attending church instead. He had given out, for the enlightenment of all those whom it might concern, that he had been driven away from the chapel by disagreements among the singers; but this assertion was not generally believed.

"It wasn't no offence you gave him, Evan," said Rees of the mill, "nor yet nothing that our Sally said; it's because he's behaved so bad to Mary of Ynysau that he can't show his face among us. I'm sorry for Mary, that I am."

"Are you? Well then I ain't; at least, not particular sorry. She hasn't lost much because John Morgan has thrown her over; he's nothing of a match for her, and she might have a better husband any day."

"So she might, Evan; but no gell likes being jilted, specially in the face of every one."

"It's all along o' that flirting hussy at the Minister's," put in Sally Rees. "She did nothing but make eyes at the schoolmaster till she got him away from Mary."

"Yes," said the miller, "and him going to church too. I call it shameful."

"That's the Minister's Eleanor too," said Sally. "She don't like going to chapel, and he follows her to church."

"And the Minister," said the miller, "is main foolish to let such things be; but he's getting old, and I s'pose he's obliged to give her her head for the sake of peace."

"Peace, indeed!" cried Evan. "A man ought never to be too old to rule his own household. As long as he preaches in chapel, chapel's the place for the gell to go to, and he's no business to let her go fooling off to church with yon conceited John Morgan following her."

"She don't care whether John Morgan follows her or not," said Sally, "she goes to church because the Dolaugleision people go there."

"I s'pose she wants to match her bonnets against the young ladies, but she won't never see them in such fly-away finery as she puts on."

"Match her bonnets!" sniggered Sally. "It ain't the ladies she wants to see."

The landlord gave a knowing screw to his face. "The schoolmaster's a rare fool," he said. "I'm glad it ain't our young Evan that's running after her. If all I hear is true, there'll be some fat in the fire presently. Our Evan saw them two," and he winked ponderously, "on the Black Hills one day this week, and I know times and times they've met by the river."

"Your Evan didn't see them together on the Black Hills," said Sally.

"Now ain't that like a wench to contradict her elders? Our Evan saw Mr. Reginald up Cwmgoggerddan, and he met the Minister's Eleanor in the Pass. What would they be after but meeting; and I make no doubt that old Peggy, which is a bad old woman, wouldn't mind being in the secret."

"I'm glad our Sally ain't one of the mischievous sort," said the miller.

"Me, indeed!" returned Sally. "Indeed, if I couldn't do my sweethearting respectable at home, I wouldn't do none at all; and her that pretends to be so nesh and tender, to be seen walking on the Black Hills at dusk. La! I could take her and shake her, and it's a real pity some one don't tell the Minister."

It certainly was not a very pleasant spot to choose for a rendezvous on a winter afternoon; after all, perhaps, there had been no rendezvous; though, certainly Eleanor had been seen on the cold bare

Black Hills, which lay behind Llansawyl Church; while as to Mr. Gwynne, he might have been seen there with his gun and his dogs three times a week at least in the shooting season. For the woodcock loved the heather which grew on those gaunt hill-sides, and the snipe haunted the boggy upland hollows, and the hares squatted in the long moss, and the rabbits scudded in and out of their warrens, as if the Black Hills were their own undisputed domain; and Mr. Gwynne could find plenty of sport among all the wild creatures, and fill his game-bag to repletion as often as he liked.

A couple of days after young Evan Rees had met the Minister's granddaughter on the way up the hill, Mr. Gwynne might have been seen again tramping over the thin coating of snow which covered the hills, on his way home after an afternoon's shooting. He paused, and turned at a place where a transverse valley joined the main alope, and where a clump of larches gave a little shelter to a tiny mud cabin, the only human habitation on that side of the hill.

"You go on, Dix," he said to the keeper. "I'm going to take old Peggy a rabbit. This frost is hard on the old lady."

The keeper touched his hat, and did as he was bid.

"Considering all the poaching and snaring that old woman does," he muttered, "I can't see how she deserves a couple of rabbits two and three times a week, as she's been getting of them lately, ready killed for her. If I was to give Sir Evan a tip of what's going on, it'd be the better for all parties in the long run. But, there, how's the likes of I to go telling tales to the likes of he?"

With these reflections he trudged on to unbosom himself to his cousin, the landlord of the Dolaugleision Arms.

Meanwhile, his master reached the door of the cottage by scrambling up a flight of uncouth steps, worn, rather than hewn in the rock. It was a miserable hovel, consisting of four mud walls, and a thatched roof, and was entered by an abrupt descent from the threshold of about eighteen inches. As he pushed the door open and looked in, a broad shaft of light from the setting sun entered and fell on a tall oak press, with elaborate carving which would have made the hearts of all Wardour Street leap with envy. A narrower gleam from a tiny window revealed with uncompromising candour the dinginess and poverty of the

bed, which stood against one of the unplastered walls. A third gleam was shed on the cold white ashes of the hearth through the wide-open chimney. Across the unceiled roof black beams loomed in the shade, and the shelves of a not very profuse larder were suspended among them. The floor consisted of broad, slate-like pieces of stone, worn into many discrepancies, and coated with what might be roughly estimated as the accumulated dirt of several generations.

"Are you in, Peggy?" called Mr. Gwynne from the doorway.

There was no reply. He repeated his question louder. It was answered from behind him, and the old woman arrived, breathless, holding the corners of her apron in her hands.

"Here I am, Mr. Reggie. I was gathering this"—indicating the contents of her apron—"when I saw you coming. La, I'm all out of breath with coming so quick; and I've got no message for you either, this time."

"Hum! no message; better luck next time"—this was said with a poor assumption of indifference. "And what have you been grubbing up from under the snow?" he went on. "Let's see what you have in your apron."

"That's my own business," she replied, shaking her head. "I can't tell everybody everything; now can I, Mr. Reginald?"

"Ah, I see, you're going to poison somebody's cows or pigs. That's a nice thing for an old woman to be doing."

"You won't get it out of me by chaffing, nor yet by guessing. If I was to tell, all the virtue would be gone out of it, and I might as well throw it away."

"Oh, you are going to do some witchcraft," he said carelessly. "Well, here's a couple of rabbits for you. Perhaps their livers, or their toe-nails, or some other part of them will make a pleasant addition to the caldron."

"Thank'ee, sir. You are a proper fine gentleman to think of a poor old woman in the winter time. It's real hard work to live this rough weather."

"Come, Peggy, I sha'n't believe that, as long as you find it worth while to gather herbs by the apronful. You don't make witches' broth for nothing. I'll be bound you earn as much as would keep a good-sized family."

"And there you're wrong, Mr. Reginald; they're all glad enough to come to the old woman for what she knows; but, beyond a

pat of butter, or a dozen eggs, she don't make much by what she can tell them."

"Oh, well, just tell me," he went on in the same bantering tone, "how many pats of butter and dozens of eggs you expect to get by this bundle of green stuff."

"Not a single one, on my word of honour. 'Twould spoil this charm if it were bought and sold."

"It must be a very rubbishy charm, I should say, if it isn't worth paying for. And now, Peggy, do you know I have my suspicions, seeing how near we are to New Year's Eve, that you are going to send some silly girl to look into the Princess's Well? Have I guessed, Peggy? I know I have; I can tell by your face!"

"You've turned mighty curious all of a sudden, Mr. Reginald," she replied familiarly. "And if you can tell by my face where's the use of my denying?"

"Oh, Peggy, Peggy! you are a dreadful old humbug, to befool any girl into taking such a wild-goose chase in the dead of night; all she will get at the well will be her death of cold."

"An old woman's fooling," she replied, with a meaning glance, "is not the only thing, nor the worst, that can lead a girl into mischief."

"And now, Peggy," he continued, passing over her innuendo in silence, "I should very much like to know who is to be the victim of this hoax. You may as well finish by telling me."

"Me tell!" cried the old woman, emptying her apron on to the bed and beginning to sort the contents. "Not I. I've told you nothing yet, and I won't."

"Very well; if you won't tell me I shall go to the Well of the White Princess on New Year's Eve at midnight, and see for myself."

"You might do worse than that, sir," she replied significantly. "Perhaps if the maid was disappointed by the fairies you might make it up to her."

"Peggy," he cried, "you don't really mean it is Eleanor?"

"I didn't say who it was, or who it wasn't. I won't even go so far as to say that anyone is going there at all but yourself; but I'll tell you this much, that if you don't start for Dolauhleision at once, the dressing-bell will ring before you're there. It takes me an hour, and I'm quite as brisk as you."

The old year was at its last gasp. On the threshold stood its successor, waiting to

put in an appearance, until the joviality of the dance, which Evan Rees was giving in the big club room at the Dolauhleision Arms had reached its height. The clock in the bar had struck eleven; the dancers, who had been footing it merrily since seven o'clock, with the refreshing assistance of unlimited beer, had just risen from reinforcing their powers of enjoyment more solidly at the well-spread supper-table. Everyone's face was at its reddest, everyone's voice was at its loudest, and everyone's hilarity was very easily provoked. Evan Rees surveyed the room with a complacent conviction that his party was a great success. He had invited all the good dancers, all the eligible young folk, and all the pleasure-loving seniors from far and near; and one and all had come at his bidding, save and except Mary of Ynysau, who had sent an excuse at the last moment pleading urgent family affairs in the cowbyre.

"All very fine," the landlord had said, shaking his head on the reception of the message; "but it don't take me in. All the cows at Ynysau might have been going to calve this time last year, and it wouldn't have hindered Mary from coming to a bit of fun like ours to-night. I've a great mind to tell John Morgan what I think of him and his shilly-shally ways. As to that flighty jade of the Minister's, it's time somebody took her in hand too, since the Minister don't seem up to the job. I half thought she'd have turned up her fine London nose at our bit of a dance, and I didn't mean to press her to come, for I know what the Minister thinks of such things. But la! she don't care for the Minister nor for no one else, if it isn't for herself."

Poor Master Davies! his granddaughter had sadly lowered his prestige and dimmed the brightness of the halo, which had hitherto surrounded his venerable head. It was well known that he did not altogether approve of dancing; that he had scruples which, on ordinary occasions, he good-naturedly kept in the background. But it was also well known that he specially excepted from indulgence dances at the Dolauhleision Arms, where the mixed company, the abundance and handiness of strong liquors, and the predominance of public character over private host in Evan Rees, as master of the ceremonies, increased tenfold his ordinary objections. Moreover, in his eyes, the last day of the year was an epoch too solemn to be spent in frivolity, too sacred for

anything beyond careful retrospection and self examination. It had therefore cost Eleanor much coaxing, much teasing, and several hours of pouting, before she carried her point of making one of the guests at the Dolauhleision Arms. Perhaps, pure wilfulness was not the only reason of her persistence; however, whatever the means, or the motive, there she was, the belle of the evening, dancing every dance with a grace of movement which quite bewildered her rustic partners.

"It's a sad pity Mr. Reginald ain't here, Dix," said the landlord to his cousin the keeper, accompanying the suggestion with a powerful nudge. "This fine London dancing is too spry for our young chaps. She wants summat finer to dance with."

"She may get summat finer before the evening's out," said Dix, responding to the nudge by a wink. "Mr. Gwynne, he was mighty curious to know what was coming off here to-night, and who'd be there and all about it."

"Bless us and save us!" cried Evan. "If the wind sets that way, I better fetch up a couple o' bottles of red port, and the missis must get out the best glasses and dust 'em. My eye! What'd Sir Evan say?"

So the landlord bustled off, and the whisper went about that Mr. Gwynne had promised to come after supper and dance with the Minister's Eleanor, and those who were most scandalised at the notion were the most disappointed when dancing was resumed without any sign of Mr. Gwynne's arrival.

"Tain't very likely he'd come," said Sally Rees of the mill to Evan Rees, junior, who was her admirer; "it was just one of Dix's fibs."

"Perhaps, he's been and gone," rejoined Evan, "and taken her off with him. I don't see her anywhere about—leastways, she ain't dancing."

"Then, most like she's gone home; the Minister was sore against her coming at all."

"Gone home!" ejaculated Evan. "Then John Morgan'll be in a fine taking; he's been after her all this evening for a dance, and not one has he had. Did you see how black he looked at me at supper? That was because she danced twice with me."

"She knows a good partner from a bad one, she does," replied Sally, magnanimously enough, considering how angry she had felt while Eleanor was engrossing the attention of the landlord's son. "She'd be a

fool to dance with John Morgan, when she could get you. He's too book-learned to dance proper."

"I should like to see how he looks now she's left him in the lurch. Let's see where he is."

Sally's malice was quite equal to the occasion; but their search for the schoolmaster was fruitless; he also had totally disappeared.

"He's gone too!" said Sally. "Well, no one won't miss him, since Mary of Ynysan isn't here."

"He's gone to see her home!" cried Evan; "well done, schoolmaster; if he ain't able to dance, he's got his wits about him," and he gave a low whistle, which he meant to be very expressive. Then they went back to their dancing, and forgot John Morgan's love affairs, in the engrossing interest of their own.

Eleanor, meanwhile, was walking briskly, not in the direction of home, but along the lane which led into Dolauhleision Park. She had no escort and she desired none; on the contrary, she had done her utmost to leave the Dolauhleision Arms, without the knowledge of anyone, hoping that, when her departure was remarked, it would be supposed that she had gone home early at her grandfather's bidding.

But she had reckoned without her host. John Morgan had not been hovering round her all the evening for nothing. Not one of her movements had escaped him, and when he saw that she meant to conceal her going, he determined to keep her still in view. Her evident desire for secrecy, coming after the rumour of Mr. Gwynne's intended appearance at the dance, roused his suspicions to fever pitch. He stole out by another door, and saw, with dismay, a further corroboration of what he dreaded.

"She is going to meet him, because he hasn't come here," he muttered, as keeping under the shadow of the hedge, he proceeded to follow her cautiously.

This was not the first bitter pang of jealousy under which he had writhed during the last two months. His friends and neighbours and nearest relatives had not scrupled to torture him, some with hints, others with circumstantial disclosures; but he had always given Eleanor—and himself—the benefit of the doubt.

Now, according to all appearance, he would have an opportunity of learning the absolute truth, and a wild desire came over him to do so. He did not stop to consider what would be the results of play-

ing the spy, nor if he unearthed the dreaded secret what he should do with his share of it. "If he comes to meet her I will strangle him," was the half-formed thought in his mind, as he followed her up the long winding lane, through the white park gate, on among the rocks and bushes on the hillside till she had reached the opening of the first cava. He could see very plainly against the snow in the clear moonlight that she paused, and then stood still. He stood, too, watching with bated breath and throbbing temples, ready to spring on the man whom he expected to emerge from some concealment. But he watched in vain while you might have counted a hundred; nothing broke the deep stillness around. Then Eleanor, turning her face successively north, south, east, and west, began to recite, rather than speak, in a loud, clear tone. The words she spoke were strung into rude Welsh rhymes, and were so strange to her lips that they conveyed scarcely any meaning to the listener. One thing, however, he plainly discerned; it was no signal to a lover who might be lying perdu in this lonely spot. When she had repeated the lines several times, a sudden light broke in upon him; a fearful load was lifted from his heart. The constructions that might have been made of her conduct, the conclusions that might have been jumped at had been a thousand to one against her. If she were innocent this time, why not on former occasions? If he had been deceived by appearances—he who loved her—might not those others, who were jealous of her, who distrusted her, who would be glad of her downfall, have been mistaken too? "She has come to see the fairies!" he thought in great exultation. "She will go and look into the well. She is counting her steps, and saying spella. Who'd have thought a girl brought up as she has been would give herself all this trouble for such silly nonsense." Then his exulting heart carried him on further. "Of course the well will show her naught, but if she wants to see the face of one who loves her, she shan't be disappointed. She'll think it all comes of the fairies, and perhaps it does." So, taking a turn to the left, he hastened his steps to reach the well by a flank movement, conning over the tender yet burning words in which he should presently pour out his love in the loneliness and strangeness of that midnight encounter.

Rapidly and vividly the whole scene of the fulfilment of his heart's desire

painted itself in his fancy. She would be startled by his appearance; he would soothe her, he would remind her that she had come to look for her fate, and whisper to her that her quest was not in vain. In her agitation she would listen more patiently than was her wont when she was mistress of the situation; she would fling no saucy glance at him, no tantalising words; but when he looked into her liquid brown eyes he would read her answer by the soft moonlight, while her sweet lips kept tremulous silence, and then . . . then a hot wave of joy thrilled every pulse of the schoolmaster's body . . . she would be his, and he would clasp her in his arms and bear her away to be his wife somewhere—he cared not where—out of reach of those hideous innuendoes about Mr. Gwynne, and those disagreeable reproaches over the matter of Mary of Ynysau.

And while this castle in the air was in process of erection, Eleanor, still reciting her invocation, and keeping time with slow steps to the measures of the lines, had reached the opening of the well. There she stopped, and, beginning another form of words, proceeded to sprinkle over the water the contents of a small flask.

At this thrilling juncture there was a sound of laughter behind her. It might have been the first response of the spirits to her appeal. The next moment she knew that neither spirit nor fairy was in the least responsible for it. A hand was laid on her shoulder and a mocking voice cried:

"Well, has the White Princess told you any secrets yet?"

Eleanor gave a low, sharp scream.

"Don't go into hysterics," continued the intruder. "I'm not an embodiment of the King of the Fairies. I hope you recognise me, even if I have appeared a little unexpectedly."

"Good gracious, Mr. Gwynne," gasped Eleanor, "it's all very well to say 'don't go into hysterics,' but if you come startling folks like this, what else can you expect?"

"You silly little Nell! what did you come here to see? Tell me that, silly little Nell!"

"Never you mind, Mr. Gwynne," she retorted, recovering herself. "It's no more silly for me to come than it is for you. What did you come for?"

"That's very soon told. I came to see you."

"And how did you know I was to be here?"

"Never you mind, Nellie. We have excellent authority for believing that a bird of the air can carry a matter."

"That's no answer, Mr. Gwynne. And, let me tell you, you've no business to be here at all."

"Very good, Nellie; a very good and wise remark. I allow you are right; and now will you so far make it worth my while to have taken this cold, late walk by telling me whose reflection you were hoping to see in the well?"

"No, I won't, Mr. Gwynne."

"Not if I guess right?"

"Certainly not."

"Then I suspect it was the schoolmaster's, wasn't it, Nell?" he said, coming still closer and passing his arm round her.

"Schoolmaster, indeed! Mary of Ynysau may look for the schoolmaster if she likes. Thank you!"

"So she may, Nellie; and you shall look for some one else. Come and look down into the well, and if there is a face beside your own it shall be the face of the one who loves you better than any one has ever done. Come, Nellie, we will look in together."

She did not answer. Instead of speaking she leaned her head against his shoulder, and neither of them moved to look under the dark, sheltering rocks. They stood for a moment, while in a long kiss they tasted—all undeserving as they were—one little sip of the nectar reserved for those who sit down in Love's elysium to the banquet of Hope's fulfilment.

One little sip. The next moment a hand seized Mr. Gwynne's collar, and a voice, so agitated and hoarse as to be unrecognisable cried:

"You villain! how dare you lure on an innocent girl to her ruin? How dare you?"

The startled lovers sprang apart, and Eleanor, with a cry of horror, fled at the top of her speed across rock and streamlet, till she was out of sight and earshot. The two men remained face to face in the moonlight.

"What do you mean by it?" shouted Morgan, tightening his grip. "Swear never to speak to the girl again, or I will strangle you on the spot."

"And what do you mean?" cried Mr. Gwynne, recovering from his surprise and shaking himself free. "What right have you, John Morgan, to call me to account, or to lay down the law for Miss Carroll?"

"The right every honest man has to meddle with a scoundrel."

Mr. Gwynne's answer was a blow well delivered in the schoolmaster's face, which the schoolmaster lost no time in returning. The two men were fairly matched in height and strength; but in skill and coolness John Morgan had decidedly the worst of it. A few moments, and a few cruel, angry strokes decided the matter; and when the bells of Llansawyl Church rung out their welcome to the New Year, Mr. Gwynne was groping his way back to Dolaugetisau by the feeble help of a pair of very black eyes, while the schoolmaster lay half stunned, and wholly beaten, in front of the Well of the White Princess.

How long he had lain there he only knew when he became aware that the moon had sunk down behind the Black Hille, and that a faint whiteness was stealing forth in the south-east. With the earliest daylight he crept home, and shut himself up with his wounds and bruises, physical and moral, till such time as he was fit to leave Llansawyl and present himself upon a stage where he might begin a new act of his life in presence of totally fresh spectators.

The story soon got abroad in a sadly garbled form, and Sir Evan Gwynne heard how the Minister's granddaughter and John the schoolmaster had met by the caves, with the intention of running away together, on New Year's Eve, and how their elopement had been prevented by Mr. Reginald, who had played the spy on them and pounded Morgan to a jelly. It is possible he may have learnt a truer version by private confession from his son; anyhow, he made up his mind to let Mr. Reginald make a trip to North America as soon as his black eyes had resumed their normal tint, so that the disagreeable story of how he had come by those same black eyes might die out.

The Minister heard the same story with much grief and dismay, and his eyes were at length forced open to his incapacity to manage such a headstrong coquette as his pretty grandchild. A few days after Evan Rees's party, Eleanor bade farewell without regret to the dulness of Llansawyl, and the Minister's sitting-room resumed its old-fashioned aspect. It goes without saying that she and Mr. Gwynne were easily consoled for their forcible separation.

Of course Mary of Ynysau must have heard the scandal too; but she never mentioned it, much less discussed it; and when, towards the next Christmas,

her old lover wrote a penitent letter from a village on the other side of the county, asking her if she could bring herself to forget the misunderstanding which had interrupted their courtship, and come to cheer his solitude and depression so far from their native village, she answered him in a strain which showed that she had no intention of dwelling on her old wrongs. Her answer told him that the schoolmaster who had replaced him was a man from Breconshire, and therefore totally incompetent to teach the sons and daughters of Caermarthenshire soil, that both parents and pupils would gladly welcome back their old teacher; while as to herself, if she was to be a schoolmaster's wife, she should prefer to be within reach of Ynysau, in case the dairy-work should prove too much for her fast-aging mother.

So, before Christmas, there was a great bidding, and on New Year's Eve there was a grand wedding, and the schoolmaster from Breconshire was solemnly deposed, and John Morgan and his bride set up housekeeping in the little cottage beside the schoolhouse.

"Then you ain't afraid, Mary," Sally Rees ventured to suggest, "you ain't afraid to take up with him after the way he's served you. I don't think I'd ha' done it."

"Well, you can speak for yourself," rejoined Mary, ignoring the major proposition. "If Evan Rees goes on all right, you ain't got no call to trouble yourself about any other man, leastways not about John Morgan, until I ask you."

Which she never did, and never had any occasion to do.

THE HOLLOW.

THE hollow in the old oak tree,
Where happy children play,
Where woodbines climb and cling amid
The roses' clustering spray.

The hollow in the old oak tree,
Where happy lovers meet,
To linger long and whisper low
Upon its mossy seat.

This hollow in the old oak tree,
Where old men feebly come,
To tell their tales and crack their jokes,
Or ere they totter home.

The hollow in the old oak tree—
One haunts it when the moon
Gleams on the dewy wood-walks, close
Beside the streamlet's tune,

Upon the roughened bark to spend
Hot kisses, passionate tears;
To murmur to the old oak tree,
Life's grief for Love's lost years.

MIRABEAU.

MIRABEAU has been made responsible for the French Revolution, and hence for the immeasurable miseries that accompanied it. But, fortunately for his fame, others also have been made to contest with him this undesirable honour. Necker who, from a banker's clerk, grew to be the first man in France, is one of these. Rousseau is another, and the great Voltaire is a third. As if such an event, such a swollen agglomeration of events in one, *could* owe its origin to any single man!

The body of water which, at the mouth of a river, sweeps in broad, deep currents into the sea, has, in its course from this or that mountain tarn or congeries of springs in remote pastures, suffered many a deviation, incorporated many a tributary. Mirabeau, Necker, Rousseau, and Voltaire, each in his own way, aided or diverted the revolutionary spirit in France; but, singly or together, were as little its authors as the tributaries which flow into the river or the cliffs which bend its channels are the sources of the river.

It is hard to say what Mirabeau might not have been able to do had he been treated justly by his father, and had he done himself justice. From the first day of his life to the last he was abnormal, and, being treated by his father as a monster, he developed into a prodigy that had not a little of the monster embodied with it. He was born on the ninth of March, 1749. "Don't be afraid," said the nurse, who brought the child for the father to see. She had never set eyes on such a creature, and she naturally thought the sire might be alarmed or disgusted at his offspring. Young Mirabeau, in fact, came into the world with a head big enough for two children, with a couple of teeth ready for the chief work of life, a twisted foot, and tongue-tied. By-and-by, the small-pox attacked him, and left its furrows behind. But his tongue was soon freed; he grew lusty, if not engaging to the eye; his childish wit proved that his great head was not a mere pumpkin; and his passions informed his father that delicate or masterful hands were needed to prune and nurture the young plant into the fruitful tree.

The elder Marquis de Mirabeau, however, decided, once and for all, that tenderness would be lost upon such a boy as his. He kept him at arm's length, as the Governor of

a Reformatory might keep aloof from the tainted lads under his rule.

He took it for granted that the boy's nature was as ugly as his face. Thus when, at fifteen, young Mirabeau was sent to school, he was enrolled under a vulgar, assumed name, which he was to retain until he had shown himself worthy of the name of Mirabeau; and his master was told to thrash him well. All this the boy bore with the spirit of a Spartan. It was the decree of his father. That justified it. And though he hated the plebeian name of Buffière, which he had to carry, and longed for pocket-money, which his father, of course, denied to him, he revolted not.

But, by his honest heart and his clever head, he soon gained the esteem of the pedagogue commissioned to educate by flogging him. This was not to the liking of the Marquis. A letter of the boy's to his mother, begging for some pocket-money, was still less to his liking. The Draconian sire was furious. Yet he knew not what to do; for the child which he had pronounced to be "ugly as the devil," had grown by this into a burly youth of eighteen, whom it would be neither easy nor fit to whip like a child. And so young Mirabeau was withdrawn from the school, and attached as a subaltern to a certain regiment, notorious for the severity of its Colonel.

Flung thus into the thick of life, how could he help living after his own fashion? His father was merely a "chevaux de frise"—a sire of ice to him. To his mother he had no access: this, too, was part of the Marquis's programme of education and life-discipline. He was still Buffière, not Mirabeau; and he was meanly stinted with money in a profession which demanded the spending of money. Of course he fell into debt. Hearing of this, the sire be-thought him of a letter "de cachet." For at that time a man of mark could procure an order to imprison, with or without just cause, whomsoever he chose. This warrant was not then issued. A few months later, however, when the result of so delicate and thoughtful a bringing up began to appear in grim earnest, it was issued, and the youth of twenty was summarily clapped into prison at Rochelle; its Governor actually being bidden by the Marquis, in case the prisoner did not behave himself while in durance vile, to make a report which should procure the poor fellow's removal from France to the East Indies, where he might die of a fever, or any

other contagious disease, as soon as possible.

What a father !

And yet Mirabeau loved his father through this and the other various imprisonments for which he had to thank him ! And, in a certain sense, as a patrician chattel, the Marquis felt regard for the son whom he so cruelly misused.

"Tell me what he is like," he asks, furtively, in a letter to his brother, with whom, after this first imprisonment, Mirabeau stayed awhile.

"He is ugly enough," writes the uncle of his nephew. "He has also no small stock of fire and energy ; but I have discovered in him not one word that is not indicative of an upright heart, a lofty soul, and strong genius—all, perhaps, rather too exuberant."

This praise piqued the curiosity of the Marquis.

"See that he studies my books ; and, perhaps, when he has thoroughly absorbed my principles, he will be fit for me to look upon."

Such was the gist of the curious injunctions of this curious man. Father and son soon afterwards met, to their common satisfaction for a time ; and the Marquis arranged a rich match for young Mirabeau. The latter was not eager in the business, and when the girl, who was proposed as his wife, saw his ugliness, she too said "Nay."

In that moment Mirabeau determined to win her. A few plausible words, spoken to the heart as none better than he knew how to utter them, and she eagerly consented to marry him. The marriage was solemnised ; lavish expenses were incurred in honour of the alliance between the two noble houses. And then the singular Marquis suddenly abandoned his son once again. He refused to liquidate the wedding debts. Nor was the bride's father more flexible. The two young people had, therefore, to withdraw from public life. The Marquis, so far from mitigating the situation, made matters worse by another letter "*de cachet*," by which he compelled them to live in obscurity at a certain place. For a year, Mirabeau and his wife lingered after a fashion in this humiliating existence. Then, to do service to a man who had injured him, he disregarded the letter "*de cachet*," and rode beyond the bounds of his prison for a few hours.

This came to the ears of the Marquis. Instantly the sternest measures were taken ;

and, inconceivable as it may seem, the father had his son—by this time a man of five-and-twenty—arrested like a felon, ruthlessly torn from his wife and child, and carried off as a State prisoner to the Château d'If on the Mediterranean shore. Even as he had enjoined the boy's schoolmaster to use him harshly, now he bade the gaoler spare no severity which it was in his power to employ upon his son. These things are to us an enigma. We can as little understand how the elder Mirabeau found it in his heart to behave thus towards his son, as how the son was able, even with all the generosity of his nature, to keep fresh and vigorous his love for his father throughout these manifold outrages of parental authority.

But it was with his gaolers as with his tutor, schoolmaster, and uncle. Though prepared to find in him wickedness incarnate, they grew to love him. The Governor of the Château d'If wrote to the Marquis that his prisoner behaved with perfect propriety, and had gained everyone's respect. Thereupon the prison was changed. From the Mediterranean, Mirabeau was removed to the Château de Joux in the Jura Mountains, a miserable place ruled by an iron-hearted man. His spirits now seemed to yield as they never yet had yielded to his hard fortune. His wife had refused to share his imprisonment. She danced away the hours in the midst of the provincial society of Aix. What prospects were his, in spite of the ambitions within him ? Death sooner or later, in one prison or another ; ignominy while life lasted ! A chance event, however, sent his blood anew racing in his veins as nought but love or realised ambition could. The day of Louis the Sixteenth's coronation arrived, and the Governor of the castle induced Mirabeau to accompany him to the neighbouring town of Pontarlier, as literary chronicler of the local festivities. It was there that he met Sophie, Marchioness de Monnier, a beautiful young woman of two-and-twenty, tied to a dotard of seventy-five.

This brings us to a prime incident in Mirabeau's life. Was ever man so led by his passions as he ? Was ever man so ill-fitted for self-control by so singular a domestic tyranny as his ? Already he had made one notorious false step. As Sub-Lieutenant under the most merciless Colonel in France, he had dared to woo and conquer the affections of a girl whom his Colonel had hitherto sued in vain. Imagine the Colonel's indignation. This

deed was the prime cause of the letter "de cachet," which held him in La Rochelle. Since then, however, he had married. His instincts were no longer libertine. But he was excluded from society. His own wife refused to share his troubles. And now, all at once, he felt that he was on the brink of new profligacy which would give him a scandalous fame never to be obliterated. Sophie was fascinated, not by his looks, but by his words and the romance of his life. This grew quickly to love: and the love was common to both of them. In this extremity, Mirabeau wrote a long imploring letter to his wife. He besought her, for his, her own, and their child's sake, to come to him: for she alone could save him from the wickedness that else would assuredly possess him. The letter had no effect. Years afterwards Mirabeau could say with conviction to his sister: "If I am called, on my last day, to appear before the Sublime Reason who governs nature, I will say to Him, 'I am covered with enormous stains, but Thou knowest, O Great God, if I had been as guilty as I am had she but answered as she ought to have answered that letter.'"

Mirabeau and Sophie met again and again. They loved each other now without reserve. Love gave Mirabeau new energy and power. Ordered back to his prison of Joux, he refused to go, and crossed the border into Switzerland. This new contumacy seemed to put him for ever at strife with the royal mandates. Nevertheless, he gained fresh friends among those whose authority he now defied. Chased from Switzerland back into France, he gave himself up to the Governor of Dijon, who, later, even abetted him in another scheme of flight. He appealed to the philosopher-minister, Malesherbes, who at once moved in his favour. But here the Marquis stepped in with letters "de cachet" more emphatic than ever. Mirabeau fled to Geneva, Lyons, Provence—wherever he could, to escape the detectives who were upon his track.

All this time, he and Sophie contrived to keep up a correspondence of an intensely passionate kind. She had been taken indignantly to her parent's house, and threatened with a convent; but, on the entreaty and forgiveness of her old husband, had been yielded back to him, so that she still wrote to Mirabeau as the Marchioness de Monnier:

"Hear me!" she cries towards him. "I can no longer endure this state of

suffering. Let us unite ourselves, or let me die! Else I shall not live another year; for I neither can nor will endure till then. To live apart from thee is already to die a thousand deaths daily!"

Listen now to Mirabeau in calm judgment upon this matter:

"Madame de Monnier had no one left to her but me. She was compromised, and, through my fault, menaced with ruin. Should I then have abandoned when I could defend her? Having led her to the brink of the abyss, should I have plunged her into it? I had then been a prodigy of cowardice—a monster of ingratitude; I should have deserved my fate, and have been the vilest of men! The mere idea makes me shudder! She claimed my assistance, and the execution of my vows. I flew, I ran, I crossed the Alps; and she, undoubtingly, delivered herself up to my honour and my truth."

This time the flight, to be effectual, had to be extensive. And so, in October, 1776, when Mirabeau was twenty-seven, and Sophie de Monnier twenty-three, we find them established, and living as man and wife, in the house of a tailor in Amsterdam. Mirabeau had no resources; but he had a head full of ideas. He was in Holland, too, where literary work was more in demand than elsewhere; and by toiling for fourteen and fifteen hours out of the twenty-four he could earn a louis per day. This was the beginning of the stream of pamphlets on every possible subject which he sent forth to the world. He made translations and compilations, and, without knowing it, did much to befit himself for the high position which, in his later life, was to come upon him.

His letters betray extreme happiness during these few busy months. But, in the meantime, the detectives employed by the Marquis, and by the father of Sophie, gradually narrowed their field of search. They reached Holland, Amsterdam, and the very Kalbestrand where lodged the fugitives. Here Sophie, who chanced to be alone, was seized. Mirabeau heard of it, and, careless of himself, he hurried home just in time to prevent the hapless woman from poisoning herself. One long embrace; a promise on both sides to write to each other; and the expression by Sophie of a resolve to kill herself if she did not soon hear from him; and they were carried away as prisoners in different directions.

The too-loving woman was placed in a

House of Correction by her friends; and Mirabeau, at twenty-eight, still under the amazing tyranny of his father, was thrust into the prison of Vincennes, his warder being enjoined not to speak unnecessarily to him, to give him coarse and insufficient food, to allow him but one hour's walking exercise in the corridor daily, and to refuse him writing materials.

In this prison of Vincennes, at a time when his blood was at its hottest, and his energies were at their flood, the luckless Mirabeau was kept for three terrible years by his cruel and mysterious father. He suffered in body—had fever upon fever, spat blood, and was left for weeks without a change of clothes. Yet not even this abated his filial respect. He implored his father to be merciful, but he did not reproach him, and he was ever his affectionate and respectful son.

By-and-by, the extreme severity of his confinement was moderated. He was allowed to write and read. He read omnivorously, and wrote many things, some base and shameful, and some worthy of him.

Sophie, also, from her House of Correction, wrote to him privately, using ink made of water and rusty nails. The correspondence of these ardent imprisoned lovers has been published. The passion of it may be ascribed to various reasons—not the least powerful of which was the romantic misery which held them both in thrall, as a reward, so it would seem, for their mutual constancy.

"O my friend," writes Mirabeau, "thy love and fidelity, *that* is the foundation I rest upon. Without that trust I should be engulfed in the abyss of suffering over which my fate holds me suspended. To love unceasingly is the need of my heart; to be loved always is its longing and consoling hope. Love, source of every virtue, of every pleasure, and all happiness, my soul belongs wholly to thee: my one wish, my one duty, is to obey thy voice: thou supportest my life: thou art dearer to me than life itself, which I preserve for thee alone."

Think of his circumstances, and then one may excuse him for this strain of unctuous amoroseness. He was a man of robust passions and brilliant imagination, and he was a prisoner. Of the future he dared expect little. He was surrounded with such classics as Catullus, Tibullus, and Boccaccio. Through their unsavoury light he saw the past, dwelt upon it, exaggerated its pleasures. His letters to Sophie, like

hers to him, were too intense; and so, when in after years they met, they met to quarrel, and to separate for ever.

One of his biographers—Dumont—tells an odd tale about Mirabeau, which may be true, and which, if true, must considerably lessen our interest in his love-letters.

"When writing to his mistress," says Dumont, "he would copy whole pages from periodicals of the day. 'Listen, my beloved,' he would write, 'whilst I pour out my whole soul into thy bosom;' and such intimate confidence was a literal transcript from the '*Mercure de France*,' or a new novel."

It must be remembered, however, that Dumont says this in support of his own claim as the author of many of the most successful speeches delivered by Mirabeau in the National Assembly. But Dumont's veracity has been doubted. Thus it may well be that Mirabeau's love-letters do not bear this eccentric taint.

At thirty-one, Mirabeau is again a free man, alone with his blemished reputation, married, though wifeless, and without means. His father disregards him. Once father and son came accidentally face to face, after nine years' separation. The Marquis describes the meeting: "I shall not permit him to see me yet. I did, however, chance upon him as I was coming out of Desjobert's the other day. I found he has a piercing eye, and a strong and healthy appearance: he bowed his head and drew as much on one side as possible, and I went on my way." Notwithstanding this brutality, Mirabeau was soon afterwards seen in tears before his father's portrait in his sister's house. "My poor father!" he was heard to say, with much emotion. One is cheered to know that another reconciliation followed hard after this.

The ensuing nine years were as unsettled and tumultuous for Mirabeau as for France. He instituted an action against his wife to compel her to return to him. She was willing; but her parents hindered her. He pleaded in person at Aix, before the provincial court, and astonished everyone by his eloquence. The court-house was packed, and the very roof of it covered with people anxious to hear him. If words could have won the day, he had triumphed. But it was not to be. From that time, he seemed to have some licence for the irregular life which soon grew into a habit with him. He dwelt in Belgium, London, Berlin, harried by duns, yet toss-

ing forth pamphlets and books, with the ease of a man whose mind has nothing but his work to occupy it.

In Belgium he captivated the daughter of a well-born man—a beautiful girl of nineteen—and with her he went to England, full of love as to his heart, and hoping to live by the London publishers. Here his toil was various. He scorned no honest work. For a young clergyman he wrote a sermon on the immortality of the soul; for the public he composed two hundred octavo pages on the Scheldt question. His productions fill many pages in the catalogue of the British Museum Library. Then a sudden idea sent him speeding into Germany. Why not write a history of the Prussian nation? This also duly appeared, in eight octavo volumes. He gained the goodwill of Frederic the Great, who died ere he was able to prove the worth of it. He pushed himself forward to the position of adviser to Calonne, one of the temporary Ministers of France, and with a keen eye followed the inevitable decadence of his country's Monarchy. Thus it happened that when the States-General were convoked and France was plunged into the excitement of election, the like of which it had seldom seen, Mirabeau did not hide from others his belief that now at length, in 1789, his day had come. He was elected at Aix, not by the nobles as their representative, but by the people, who remembered his extraordinary pleading for the re-surrender of his wife, and who also remembered his active goodness on their behalf in years of famine. He was elected with immense enthusiasm, chaired through the streets, and his name was on all lips. His own description of the honour with which he was welcomed in Marseilles also, may be given: "Imagine one hundred and twenty thousand people in the streets of Marseilles; the whole of that busy commercial city sacrificing a day's work; windows let at one and two louis, horses at the same; the elevation of a man who has no claim but that of uprightness, covered with palms, laurels, and olive branches; the people bowing down to the ground; women holding towards him their children as an oblation; one hundred and twenty thousand voices shouting and crying, 'Vive le Roi!' four or five hundred of the most distinguished young gentlemen of the town preceding him; three hundred carriages following him—such was my departure from Marseilles!"

This was the prelude to his short but memorable career as a statesman—from May, 1789, to March, 1791, when he died carrying with him the hopes of the Monarchy. There is no career to match it for brilliancy. On the fifth of May, 1789, he was received with murmurs when he took his seat as member for Aix. He was a man of too dubious a fame for these saviours of their country. But two years later he was followed to the grave by a procession a league long, and all Paris went into mourning for him as they would have mourned for no one else.

It was on the twenty-third of June, 1789, that Mirabeau made his mark in the Assembly. The King entered, to dismiss the representatives—"I command you, gentlemen, to disperse immediately." The Clergy and the Nobility obeyed. The Commons wavered. Everything was then at stake. In that moment up rose Mirabeau and questioned the Royal authority. "He command you! Why, it is he who should receive your wishes and not command you! I call upon you, gentlemen, to assert your dignity and legislative power, and to remember your oath (taken in the Tennis Court) which will not allow you to disperse till you have established the Constitution."

The King's deputy then re-entered: "You have heard the orders of the King," he remarked to the President.

"Yes, sir," replied Mirabeau, speaking for France. "Go and tell those who sent you, that we are here by the will of the people, and that we will be driven hence by naught but the power of the bayonet."

This is common historical knowledge; but it is worth reiterating, for upon this scene rests Mirabeau's chief claim as a motive force in the direction of the revolutionary spirit.

Never did man live with impunity the life Mirabeau lived during these few short months of his greatness! His toil was Herculean: he spoke on every important subject, and each important speech was a pamphlet.

If he was, as he was charged with being, "the first man in the world to speak on a subject he knew nothing about," it was also testimony to his gigantic powers that he could hold friends and enemies alike in a suspense of admiration while he spoke. From the Assembly he hurried home to the desk, thence to the theatre, and after the theatre he had friends to see whom it

were better he had left to themselves. Moreover, in his political life he was conscientious, let cavillers say what they please; and how infinitely that added to his labours!

When the King was a despot (by inheritance) he was opposed to the King; but when, later, the contagion of Jacobinism had turned the balance, and the people threatened to become more despotic than any King of France, then Mirabeau lent his aid to the King for the establishment of a limited Monarchy. That, however, was not to be.

On the twenty-eighth of March, 1791, though very ill, Mirabeau spoke five times in the Assembly. He staggered home, took a bath, and then, refreshed, went to the Italian Opera. From the theatre he had to be carried home to his death-bed. During the next five days he lay, almost pulseless, but with a mind clear to a marvel. His hands and feet were cold and clammy; he suffered excruciatingly. At intervals this friend and that entered the death-chamber depressed and tearful—for everyone who knew Mirabeau loved him: "They love, but do not respect me," he used to say with-unreasonable bitterness—and reported about the crowds in the streets awaiting intelligence about him. Messengers from the King came several times a day; but there was no hope.

Listen to some of his utterances during the intervals of comparative ease which visited him. He died dramatically, says Talleyrand. Yes; as the great must die: for, without the stir of the first four acts, the fifth, be it as strong as it might, would be but tame.

Cabanis, his doctor, was disheartened at his own want of success.

"Thou art a great physician," said Mirabeau; "but the Author of the wind, which overthrows all things; of the water, which penetrates and fructifies all things; of the fire, which vivifies or destroys all things—He is a greater physician even than thou."

They told him about the anxiety of the mob in the streets.

"So sensitive and good a people," said he, "well deserve that one should devote himself to their service, and suffer all things for the establishment and consolidation of liberty. I gloried in consecrating my whole life to their cause; and I am glad that I die in the midst of them."

On the morning of his death, they wheeled his bed towards the window that he might see the sun rise.

"If that is not God, it is at least his cousin-german," said he, looking at the sun.

Then, almost "in extremis," he discussed public affairs for three-quarters of an hour; and said those remarkable words: "I carry in my heart the dirge of the Monarchy, the ruins whereof will now be the prey of the factions."

Shortly afterwards, he died.

Byron's saying, that "difficulties are the hot-bed of great spirits," was never better exemplified than in the life of Gabriel Honoré de Riquetti, Count of Mirabeau.

RED TOWERS.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER IX. NEW CONQUESTS.

CELIA DARRELL and her aunt, Mrs. Percival, were people to whom is applied that ill-used word "artistic." They understood the happy union of art and fashion in furniture, and could talk the jargon of all this, though their views were not, for various reasons, carried out very logically at River Gate. Paul Romaine's quaint old house was a delightfully suggestive field for them. He had been quite right in his idea of doing up the house; not one room could be left as it was; but, fortunately, he was sincere and eager in his wish to spend any amount of money on it, to make it really pretty for Celia. She and her aunt spent two hours that morning very pleasantly in wandering through the rooms—the shady, quiet, brown old rooms—planning new furniture and new decorations, with Paul in attendance, obedient to Celia's every look, and smile, and word. He had not many ideas of his own on these subjects, and was quite sure that from Celia's taste there could be no appeal. With any one else he would have had something to say on the fitness of things, and would instinctively have scoffed at the notion of furnishing his old country house in the modern "high art" style of a suburban villa. For Paul's taste was naturally excellent, and he inherited from the mother, who had lived at Red Towers, a kind of cultivation very superior to that of the women who were now pulling her arrangements to pieces. But the quiet

daylight of Paul's natural mind was at present lost in the dazzling radiance of Celia. She must have her own way; he must follow her, as she followed the fashion. Only, like another young hero we have read of, "he would have real marble in place of stucco, and, if he might, perhaps solid gold for gilding:" that is, the modern equivalent of these things; ebony, for instance, instead of ebonyized wood, though Mrs. Percival sweetly told him that he would ruin himself. She and Celia wandered from room to room, imagining, suggesting, trying effects, while a soft sun streamed in at the tall old windows, and all the pictures listened sadly. Sabin, also, who came smiling in to move some furniture, went back to his wife with doubtful shakes of the head. Paul, devoted as he was, found it a relief, when Mrs. Percival had made notes enough to content her as a beginning, and when he began to see a chance of taking Celia away into the garden and the woods, her aunt showing signs of being considerably tired. In the garden the noble old cedars could hardly be expected to give up their place to any trees of more perfect form, or more satisfying colour, or anyhow of a higher order in creation. Here there was no terra-cotta, except ancient red bricks with the extra baking and decorating of time; no peacock blue, except flashing and shimmering in the peacock's tail as he strayed across a sunny distance of lawn.

Mrs. Percival sat down in the study, and sent for Mrs. Sabin to talk to her, with an idea of further independent excursions by-and-by. From the study window she could see the two young people going slowly away from the house in the shade of the cedars. They were a very nice-looking couple, certainly: no doubt it would be all right, thought Mrs. Percival.

Celia was just the girl to appreciate, at their fullest value, all the good things of this life; she loved everything that was pretty; there was no doubt that her house would be charming, and that she would keep it so; only—would she ever be dull? And then, what would she do, and what would Paul do? For their characters had not the harmony of their looks; Mrs. Percival knew this well, and it made her secretly uneasy now and then.

The Vincent affair remained on her mind unpleasantly, too; it had seemed to bring out a certain heartlessness in Celia, or, at least, a pretence at heartlessness, for Mrs. Percival was very sure that she was more

troubled than she chose to show. But, to all appearance, nothing could have been more perfect than her content with Paul and the future, ever since Vincent went away.

It was a lovely old garden. Near the house it had a certain stiffness of long walks with stone steps, clipped yews, and a fish-pond. All about the lawn, which sloped down to this, were long flower-beds, which the bad taste of the old gardener, the ignorance of Colonel Ward, and the carelessness of the Squire, had caused to be arranged in dazzling bands of red, yellow, and blue.

In the early summer there were plenty of old-fashioned roses, but they were nearly all gone now. Below the pond and the yew-hedges, a gate led straight into the deep mazes of the wood.

Paul was full of happy excitement as he took Celia all about the garden, and showed her what he thought the prettiest corners. It was the first time that they had been here alone together; of course she had seen it all last autumn, but that, to Paul, was a former state of existence, and a very poor, and cold, and dull one. To be sure he was in love with her then; so far that he was never happy or at rest for a moment, unless Miss Darrell in her black dress, pale, sometimes a little thoughtful, but generally smiling, was somewhere within sight. But then he had hardly dared to dream of her ever really belonging to him; or, rather—for Paul's instincts were generous, even when he was in love—of his belonging to her, himself and all that he had in the world, given to her service for ever.

Since then he had learnt a great many things—or, at least, he thought so; like other such trustful natures, having no idea of the depth of his own ignorance, or of all that Celia was yet to teach him. At present she had taught him nothing, being herself practical, hard, and happy, not even knowing, as she had truthfully told her aunt, what love was, till Vincent, the other day, brought her the first beginning of that terrible knowledge.

Celia laughed at Paul, very sweetly, for his evident delight in getting away into the garden.

"Yes," she said, "you have got away from Aunt Flo, and paint and paper, and all that, but you haven't got away from me. I am just as tiresome as she is. You think the garden perfect, poor dear, as well as the house, and I shall be quite horrid if I tell you that those geraniums and calceolarias are utterly ghastly."

"Are they? Yes, I suppose they are," said Paul a little absently.

"Yes, loathsome," said Celia, looking up with her most charming smile. "Not quite so loathsome as a stuffy room crammed with books, like your dear study, where we left poor Aunt Flo just now. I saw her eyes wandering over the bookcase, Paul, with feelings like my own. That would make such a jolly little morning-room, done with terra-cotta and black, and with shelves running all round for china."

"And some draperies, and Japanese screens, and yellow drain-pipes with bul-rushes sticking out of them," said Paul, smiling faintly, as he stood by the gate and gazed down into the glowing depth of the wood.

Celia looked at him, smiling her sweetest, her eyes intensely blue.

"You are getting on very nicely," she said. "I shall be quite proud of you in time."

He looked round at her with an expression that was rather new to him, and made her feel a little grave in spite of herself.

"Do you really want the study?" he said. "Then you shall have it, and do what you like with it. You ought to know already that the whole thing is yours to do what you like with."

She answered him with a sudden earnestness almost equal to his own.

"Don't make me worse than I am, Paul. You ought to see when I mean things and when I don't. Don't you know that I can be perfectly happy in the dear old house as it is, without anything being done to it at all? I can, indeed, and I will, if it makes you the least unhappy. As to the study, I wouldn't have it touched for worlds."

It was a very quiet, shady corner down there by the gate into the wood; and Celia let Paul thank her in his own way. Presently she said to him softly:

"Do you know that you are spoiling me, and that I am not half good enough for you in any way? No; listen. I was not brought up as nicely as some girls, and I've got nothing; and you ought to marry a different sort of girl, you know. And you are doing all this for me just as if I was a grand young woman and a very good match. And really—you ought not to give in to me in the way you do—it is more terribly spoiling than I can tell you. I thought so in the house just now. It is so sweet of you; but it isn't at all a good thing. Paul, I sometimes feel so sure that you won't be happy with me."

"What makes you talk like this? What utter nonsense!" murmured Paul in his happiness.

"I don't know," she said. "You are so good—it makes one feel that you ought to know the truth, I suppose. You ought to know that you are making a mistake—won't you believe it?"

"No," he said quietly. "I happen to know better."

When Celia thought of the little scene afterwards, she was startled at herself. It seemed to show that the strongest nature might lose its balance, and be affected by foolish outside things—even by such a very foolish thing as the generous, devoted love of a boy. For though Paul was much taller than herself, and, in truth, much cleverer and much wiser, she could never think of him as anything but a boy. But the simple nobleness of his love for her seemed to raise up something in her nature which had not been there before—some generosity to meet his, some painful consciousness of all that he was giving for such a poor return. At that moment, in a way, she certainly liked Paul better than she had ever liked him before; and yet his touch became unbearable—a sort of fear, born of her own falseness, made her eyes droop before his, and, in this first stroll with him round the garden at Red Towers, she was very near obeying some angel's voice, and breaking off her engagement altogether.

"Not into the wood now, please," she said as Paul was opening the gate. "I thought you were going to show me the stables."

"Well, you know, the stables are a serious subject," he said rather shyly. "They are very much worse than the house, I must tell you, and I'm not sure that they won't want rebuilding altogether. There's nothing there but the pony, and Ford keeps it all as tidy as he can; but Colonel Ward thinks there's something wrong in the construction, which I don't understand. If you would let him show you, and explain it all—but of course you would understand, because you know about horses, and I don't, you see."

"Why didn't Colonel Ward teach you?"

"I don't know. I suppose I was too stupid to learn. It doesn't matter," said Paul. "You will have to manage all that, if you don't mind."

"That will be beyond me," said Celia, though her eyes shone at the prospect. "I can ride and drive, certainly; but I can't quite take the situation of coachman, sir."

I believe I could choose a horse—at any rate for such a trusting master as you; but I'm afraid of your Colonel, do you know. He isn't as nice as you. He doesn't like me."

"The dear old boy hardly knows you," said Paul. "If you choose him to like you, of course he will."

"Have I such a strong will as that, do you think?"

"I don't know. I think you can do anything you like. Perhaps it is not will, exactly."

"I have been told I could do it by electricity," said Celia; she had quite recovered herself now, and they were walking round into the stable-yard. She smiled as she spoke, and remembered who it was who had talked to her about her magnetic powers. He knew something about them, perhaps—but not poor Paul.

"Well, I will try to do something very hard," she said, still smiling. "I will try to make Colonel Ward like me better than he likes you."

"All right. You will succeed, no doubt; and I shall be awfully glad if you do."

"If I take away your only friend, Paul?"

"You won't do that," he said.

"How do you know? Somebody once told me I was a witch, and witches are always doing mischief of that kind. Suppose I was really a nasty, malicious witch, and tried to make you and the Colonel hate each other."

"I don't think you could do that," said Paul, rather thoughtfully.

"So there is a limit to my power, is there?"

"You couldn't do what you couldn't."

"What language for a man who has taken a degree like yours! I understand you though—thank you, Paul. You don't believe I have it in me to do anything really vicious."

He laughed. "Make the Colonel like you as much as you please," he said, pushing open the old yard door.

Whatever faults there may have been in the stable-yard at Red Towers, it was charming to look at; it was almost the prettiest part of the old precincts of the place. The old buildings, with their red, time-worn gables, and beetling eaves, and turrets round which pigeons were flying, looked down with a grand air on the broad grass-grown court below.

Two or three great overhanging chestnut trees, their stems hidden behind walls,

their large leaves touched with yellow, laid deep shadow across half the yard, where an old retriever lay asleep by his kennel. It all looked unused, lonely, yet not neglected; ivy and Virginia creeper had their way there, as everywhere else about the place, wreathing the long old stable-roof in lovely confusion.

A smart little dog-cart was pulled out of the coach-house, where three or four old-fashioned carriages reposed in shadow, and a clinking sound came from the saddle-room where Ford was cleaning harness.

Moss on the roofs, grass between the stones, chickens wandering in and out of those open useless doors; altogether it was evidently a yard belonging to a master who found none of his happiness in horses.

Ford looked out of his door with as much interest and excitement as his steady old mind was capable of, and no little anxiety too. The news of the Squire's engagement had only just reached his servants, and they were of course very glad, not having had time to fear the loss of their situations. Old servants do not at once realise that an old place can get on without them. At the same time, Miss Darrell brought with her a character rather alarming to people in Ford's line. Everyone knew who and what her father had been; with all his faults, about the best judge of a horse to be found in England. He was an authority on all racing matters; his stud-farm was famous; his stud-groom a hero of his kind; he had won many races, and his stable arrangements were the admiration of all those who understood these things. He himself was a daring rider, and had been a very popular man. Poor Tom Darrell! he was dead; and before he died he had gone to the dogs very completely. His old friends did not talk about him much; but his name was likely to linger long in the mouths of grooms and jockeys, for he was a master in their craft. Colonel Ward used to allow Ford to talk about him, and to quote him as an authority, for Ford had visited his stables in days gone by; but the Colonel always ended by making him a text for moral reflections, not much needed by Ford, the steadiest of the steady, but taken with respect from a man who, in his quiet way, knew as much about horses as Captain Darrell himself.

Of course, Ford despised Mr. Romaine nearly as much as he loved him, and was often heard to complain of being utterly thrown away in his service. Sir Paul had

been a splendid master, and it was only for his sake, and to keep up the credit of Red Towers as far as possible, that Ford had persuaded himself to stay on. The Colonel, to be sure, was some comfort; but the poor dear young gentleman was enough to break one's heart. When Ford first heard that his master was going to marry Captain Darrell's daughter, he looked very grave, and asked Colonel Ward's man if the young lady knew that the Squire couldn't so much as saddle a horse, much less ride one; much less tell a thoroughbred when he saw him; that he would not drive the old pony if he could help it, and if he did, was sure to run into the gate-post. At first, Ford could not at all swallow the incongruity of such a marriage; but presently, by converse with the more brilliant Barty, he began to see that it might be a blessing, and a way for Red Towers to regain its character, and for himself to rise in the estimation of all who knew him. The more he thought of it, the more he was inclined to respect his new mistress, and he looked out with painful anxiety, when the Squire brought her into the yard that morning, to see what impression those empty stalls would make on a mind so full of knowledge.

Then Mr. Romaine called him out of the saddle-room.

"Look here, Ford; I want you to show Miss Darrell the stables. I dare say she will ask some questions, and you can answer them better than I can."

"Yes, sir," said Ford. He glanced at Miss Darrell with deep approval; her appearance was what he called neat, and impressed him very favourably.

"Stood there smiling," he told Barty afterwards, "and as if she'd stand no nonsense. Just the look I've seen on the Captain's face, when things in general was going right, and new plans was coming into his head. Just those same beautiful blue eyes, too. That young lady will have her own way, mind you, and with other things as well as horses, mark my words! Master Paul," said Ford with a tinge of sadness, "he ain't no match for her, bless you. But I expect he's sharp enough to know it."

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Ford, touching his cap a second or third time to Celia, "there ain't much to see in empty stables. I do my best, as the Colonel knows; but there ain't any pride or satisfaction in it."

"The stables won't be empty long," said his master. "Show Miss Darrell where the horses are to be. We shall see

whether she agrees with the Colonel that the whole thing must be pulled down."

"I don't see the necessity myself, miss," said Ford. "The Colonel's very particular; but Sir Paul was satisfied, and our horses was some of the best in the county, just as they will be again. But you'll know best, miss, if you'll please to look round."

"Thank you, Ford," said Celia, very graciously. "I am sure you know all about it. What a pretty little cart you have got there!"

"Latest improvement in the shaft, miss; but it ain't new to you, I expect."

Paul stood by smiling with amusement, while Ford, quite carried out of his usual solemnity, conducted Celia round his premises, asking her opinion at every step. She checked him a little, laughing and turning away, when he began to wonder how many horses he had better look out for; what new carriages would be wanted; what helpers had better be engaged.

"Quite right, Ford; you shall know all about it in a day or two," said Paul. "I shall talk it over with the Colonel. Only, whatever you do, don't fetch me out to look at horses."

"No, sir," said Ford, grinning from ear to ear. "But perhaps Miss Darrell will be pleased to give her opinion."

"I hope she will. One day last year we thought we wanted a horse," said Paul to Celia, "and a man brought one here to be looked at. The Colonel happened to be away, and Ford sent for me. I don't think he will ever do it again. I suppose I had some idea of not being a disgrace to him, so I began making remarks on this animal. And the result was not satisfactory; was it, Ford?"

"No, sir. Yes, miss," said Ford, turning confidentially to his new friend. "I was uncommon glad when my master said he didn't like the beast, and walked off. The fellow that brought him here knew what I thought of him. I didn't fancy him either; but my reasons was different."

"What were your reasons, Ford?" asked Celia. "I dare say I should have agreed with you."

"No manner of doubt you would, miss. But I'll say no more, if you please, though it's safe enough, as names hasn't been mentioned," said Ford, with the caution of his craft.

While they stood talking there in the shade of the chestnuts, Ford wondering more and more how such a beautiful and clever young lady came to fancy his master

—a master with such defects, and not even the grace to be ashamed of them—a great patter outside the large gates announced a party of some kind. They flew open, and Colonel Ward came in, his six dogs rushing before him, and tearing round the yard.

All but Di: she trotted straight to Celia Darrell, where she stood by Paul, looked imploringly up in her face for a moment, and then lay down at her feet. Dogs will sometimes do these unaccountable and unreasonable things. Di, when she did them, was irresistible; and Celia, apparently, found her so. She knelt suddenly down on the ground for a moment, put her arm round the dog's neck, and kissed the white curly head; then rising up instantly, with a faint flush and her prettiest smile, she went forward to shake hands with Di's master. Paul's first look, as he stood by and saw this little demonstration, was one of horror. Mrs. Percival was always kissing her little dogs; but Celia never kissed them, and Paul had often rejoiced thankfully that she did not. Dogs always obeyed her, and she treated them with a sort of cool kindness. Di, as far as Paul knew, was the first dog who had ever laid claim to an outward sign of her love, and received it; but even Di was not good enough to be kissed by Celia. Paul was sensitive and fanciful about these things—a muff, we must repeat—and he felt that kiss like a degradation. But then he looked at his old friend the Colonel, and he saw that the stern, grey face was full of smiles and softness; evidently—had Celia divined it?—the way to his heart was through the hearts of his dogs.

"Di will be a proud dog for ever, Miss Darrell," the Colonel was saying.

His hat was off; he bent his cropped grey head very low over Celia's hand, and just touched it with his moustache. A courtly old Frenchman could not have paid homage more gracefully to the future mistress of Red Towers.

"They are such beautiful dogs," murmured Celia, half laughing; "and that one is a perfect darling."

"I am delighted that you admire them. May I say—Paul is a fortunate fellow. I

meant to do myself the honour of calling on Mrs. Percival and you this afternoon——"

"She is here now; she is in the house," said Celia. "Shall we go to her?"

"We have been making all sorts of plans," said Paul. "I wish you had come a little sooner, Colonel. We have been overhauling the stables and coach-house."

"Then you certainly did want me. Never mind; we must do it again. Come here, dogs. Miss Darrell, will you accept one of these dogs? Dick and Di won't leave their old master——"

"Are you so sure about Di, Colonel?" said Paul, rather mischievously. "She seemed inclined to give herself away, just now."

"Di is perfectly lovely, and so nice to stroke," said Celia softly, laying her hand on the dog's head. "But they are all delightful," as she stood in the middle of the white, curly crowd—everybody forgetting, as perhaps she did herself, that she had laughed last year at the Colonel's flock of woolly lambs. "But if you really mean it, Colonel Ward, and if I may choose—come here, you pretty shy thing; what is your name?"

"He is Jack," said the Colonel, "or whatever you like to call your dog. Well, yes, he is a good dog; he has the shilling mark, you see; he's all right. He's rather a dismal, low-spirited fellow; that's the worst of him."

"He wants petting, that's all," said Celia, who had now taken Jack's head between her hands, and was looking into his mournful eyes. "He has a great deal of character; but it wants bringing out. You have too many of them, Colonel Ward; you can't study each one separately, as I shall study Jack."

"Jack is a lucky dog," said the Colonel decisively.

Ford held open the gate for all these visitors to pass through. Colonel Ward lingered a moment to call Punch and Judy, who had run off to play with the old retriever. Celia turned round and looked at Paul with eyes full of laughter. She did not speak, but her eyes said: "What do you think now? Am I a witch?"

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER IX. MAY MAKES A CONQUEST.

GOWER was a worshipper of the sex, and only needed encouragement from his goddess to be the most abject of all her devotees. The encouragement even of a Pattie Pratt intoxicated him; and, though our heroine's encouragement of him differed as widely as her character from that of the calculating Pattie, it had upon him a still more overpowering effect.

May was one of those winning girls whom modesty itself makes bold, even as the birds of the Arctic regions are tame through an excess of wildness. Knowing no evil, she feared none, and was, therefore, as frank as a little child in her intercourse with men.

Love, of course, would teach her artful dissimulation, as it teaches the peewit to lead you away from its nest; but where there was not the least stir or fear of such a feeling, the girl was as frank as a child.

In this, and indeed in other ways, she was an absolute revelation to Gower, who had hitherto known no other kind of frankness in a girl than a barmaid's free and easiness. Then May was incomparably the prettiest girl he had ever seen, with that kind of beauty which is rather of the mind than the body—the beauty of expression. Her face spoke to you with the eloquence of exquisite music, accompanying and making poetry of her most commonplace words. She had the most expressive eyes in the world, whose laughing, mocking brilliance seemed in perpetual opposition to an exceedingly sweet mouth, which could not, you would feel assured,

say what her eyes sometimes suggested of sarcasm or ridicule.

And her face had had a good deal to do with Gower's acceptance of Fred's invitation. Having seen her photograph in Fred's album, he had fallen straight in love with it in his day-dreaming manner; and his falling in love with the original was a foregone conclusion, unless she proved to be very much plainer and less pleasant than her photograph suggested. Whereas the surprise was the other way altogether.

On the other hand, May was a good deal disappointed not to find in Mr. Gower the hero she expected Fred's friend to be; and the chief reason for her disappointment was the curious, characteristic, and ungracious one that he fell at once at her feet! A young girl is pretty sure to despise an adorer whose adoration she does not return; and, as May certainly did not return Gower's, he fell into rank with Mr. Spratt.

But her frank friendliness, which should have discouraged him if he had known anything of girls of her kind, supplied the encouragement he needed to overcome his shyness.

We are speaking as though May and Gower had been intimate for months, whereas they have only just been introduced to each other; but they settled down into the mutual relation we have just described in a surprisingly short time after their introduction to each other.

"I really don't know what to say to you for Fred, Mr. Gower, as he doesn't say much for himself," said the Vicar with clouded brow, when he had read Fred's letter at breakfast on Monday morning.

"Ob, I have heard myself from him, sir," replied Gower, cheerfully. "He has had

to go to London to serve a friend, he says."

"He has been more explicit to you than to me, then. Does he say when he is likely to come down?"

"He doesn't say, sir; he doesn't know yet himself."

"I really hardly know how to apologise for him; it is very bad treatment of you, very," the Vicar said, in extreme annoyance. He did not in the least believe that Fred's business in London was undertaken in the disinterested service of a friend; while he strongly suspected a gambling transaction, or some scrape, to be at the bottom of it. Besides, he was hospitably and deeply chagrined at the slight shown to a guest.

"He couldn't help himself, sir; and I don't mind really, if I'm not in every one's way," Gower answered, glancing over at the sweet, bright face opposite him, which, indeed, had inspired the stammering humility of his reply.

May, however, had not a thought to spare to him, for she was troubled greatly by her father's evident annoyance, not at Fred's absence merely, but at its suspected cause. Of this she had no doubt from her father's manner; and her fear of provoking another attack upon Fred overcame her anxiety to learn what he said himself about this mysterious London visit, and kept her silent.

"It's really very good of you not to mind," said the Vicar, highly pleased by Gower's diffident politeness. "But he will be here to-night probably, or at latest, to-morrow; and meanwhile I can get you some shooting, if you won't mind pottering about by yourself—or Spratt, perhaps, would accompany you. Does he shoot?" he turned to ask May so confidently as to suggest to the already jealous Gower, that the little creature who preached yesterday upon the seven golden candlesticks was engaged to this girl!

"I don't think he ever shot at anything; but he'd try with Mr. Gower, I dare say," replied May with perfect gravity—so gravely that Gower feared to laugh.

"I couldn't think of troubling him," he said hastily.

"No, I'm sure he doesn't shoot; he's very short-sighted," May added reflectively. "But he comes sometimes to the archery meetings," as though this indicated an undeveloped sporting instinct. Her father laughed at this passive evidence of a latent

genius for sport; and Gower, reassured, ventured to join in the laugh.

Thus May effected her object. She was not given to saying sarcastic things without provocation; and she spoke so now only to do away with the impression her father's appeal to her must have given Mr. Gower—that she was engaged to Mr. Spratt, of all men in the world! Of course she repented her sarcasm in the moment of uttering it, and hastened to make a lame attempt at reparation.

"I think he's fond of fishing."

"It's more apostolic; but it will hardly help us here, my dear; unless you'd like to go half-a-day's journey to Riversdale for it, Mr. Gower."

Half-a-day's tête-à-tête with Mr. Spratt!

"No, thank you," he hastened to say, "I don't care at all for fishing, or—or anything. I'd rather loaf about a bit, and see the place."

"I have, unfortunately, to attend a meeting to-day in Leeds," said the Vicar.

"We might take Mr. Gower to Helsby Abbey, May," suggested Mrs. Beresford.

"If he cares for ruins," May answered, looking across at Gower with her frank, fawn-like eyes, free from the shadow of self-consciousness.

"I should like to go greatly," he answered eagerly.

"Do take Spratt, if you go there," urged the Vicar. "You would be a perfect godsend to him, Mr. Gower, as an entirely new audience for a lecture on the ruins."

"If Mr. Gower doesn't mind strong language!" May said, raising her eyebrows interrogatively.

"I don't mind at all," he answered nervously, having no idea of what she meant, and not much of what he said.

"I don't know what you mean by strong language, May," her mother said ag-grievedly.

"Then, mamma, you've never heard Mr. Spratt upon Henry the Eighth and the Blessed Reformation, its robberies and ruins."

"He's a bit High Church," Mrs. Beresford said, apologetically.

"And Henry the Eighth is a bit trying," added the Vicar, to complete the apology.

Gower, as he seemed to look to him for his opinion on the matter, murmured, "He did run rather a mucker," in a low tone, fearing to be drawn into a betrayal of his historical ignorance.

"Or, there's Beechwood. Mr. Spratt might take Mr. Gower there without any

shock to his feelings, and it's well worth seeing," suggested May mischievously; having in her mind's eye a lively picture of two most mutually uncongenial men imaginable wandering together through the solitudes of Beechwood for an eternal day.

"I really don't want any one; I mean, if you could spare the time to do the—that Henry the Eighth place," stammered Gower shyly, in his hasty recoil from a day of undiluted Spratt.

"Why not do it without the Henry the Eighth?" suggested the Vicar, divining his guest's distaste for Spratt.

But Mrs. Beresford, who had diplomatic reasons of her own for wishing the party to consist of a divisible four, would not hear of this suggestion.

"Without Mr. Spratt, you mean? I think we ought to take him; we show him so little attention, and he likes so to root about old ruins."

"Like ivy," said May.

After breakfast May got Gower to herself in the garden, in order to find out from him all she could about Fred.

"Did Fred say what took him to London?" she asked timidly, fearful of hearing some gambling scandal.

"He only says it's to serve a friend."

"That's so like him!" she cried enthusiastically, with, as Gower thought, a most becoming enthusiasm.

"Yes, he's an awfully good fellow," Gower rejoined, and he then proceeded to eulogise Fred extravagantly. He admired Fred, as we know; but he would hardly have spoken as he did of his generosity and general magnanimity, if he had not perceived how he was thereby recommending himself to Fred's charming sister.

"You're his great friend?" May said, looking at him with an expression which the most accomplished coquetry would have envied, though there was not a particle of coquetry behind it.

"One of them—he has no end of friends, you know—he's that kind of fellow."

"He always speaks of you as his great friend," which, indeed, Fred always did at home, with an eye to his mother's reverence for rank and wealth.

"Does he? We are great chums."

"We were so afraid he might get into a—wild set."

"Well, he isn't a muff, you know."

"But he isn't fast, I mean?"

"Not what you'd call fast," he replied, as though May's notions of fastness were

extreme. "We have all to go the pace a bit in Cambridge."

May was silenced, for this confirmed her worst suspicions. Having no idea that Gower considered fastness creditable, she imagined that he was minimising Fred's wildness as much as possible, and magnanimously sheltering him behind himself.

Gower, construing her silence according to his own ideas, and imagining her lost in admiration of Cambridge manliness, added complacently:

"Cambridge wouldn't be half a bad place if it wasn't for those beastly exams."

"They couldn't well do away with them, I suppose," she said, laughing, tickled in spite of her depression about Fred by the idea of exams. being an incidental drawback to a University.

"I suppose not," he replied, laughing also, with a dawning, but dim idea of the jest. Then, to show that he understood the real object of examinations, he added seriously:

"Exams. are all right for fellows who want to be parsons."

This recalled Fred to May's mind.

"I'm afraid Fred is rather idle."

"Well, he doesn't do much in the reading way; the fact is, he hasn't got the time."

"Oh!"

"No, he hasn't indeed; he's in for everything."

"But what do you go to Cambridge for?"

"Of course, if you're going into the Church or that kind of thing, you have to read, but those reading fellows are out of it altogether."

"Out of it?"

"Out of everything. They might as well read at home, and most of 'em are muffs."

"But what's the good of going there if you don't read?"

"Oh, you get to know other fellows, and see a bit of life. Look at all the friends your brother has made there."

"It seems rather a dangerous place for a popularman—and expensive too," she threw out tentatively, in the hope, or rather fear, of hearing something of Fred's gambling difficulties.

"The expense is the danger," rejoined Gower epigrammatically, much to his own surprise and delight. "That's about where it is; the expense is the danger. You can drop a pot of money in Cambridge without much to show for it; and your brother is so free-handed that he

finds himself sometimes in a hole; but he has lots of friends to help him out." This he said to suggest himself as one of these friends in need, but it gave such a humiliating view to Fred, that May was silenced.

Gower, on his part, was anxious for a little more reassurance upon the point of May's relations with Mr. Spratt. It is true that she seemed to laugh at him, but, on the other hand, her father certainly spoke as if the Curate were wholly at her disposal.

"Is Mr. Spratt a Cambridge man?"

"I think so. Yes, he is; I remember his comparing notes with Fred about it."

"There wouldn't be much to compare, I fancy; I mean that Mr. Spratt seems to have been a reading man."

"That is, 'a muff'?"

"Well, he doesn't seem to have much go in him."

"He's a very good man."

"He looks it," retorted Gower dryly, now thoroughly reassured by May's tone of her indifference to the Curate. "But he isn't the kind of man you'd like to spend the day with alone, you know—"

"At Beechwood? But he wouldn't have bored you at Beechwood, he would have been too busy collecting beetles; he always goes there for them."

"You didn't really mean me to go there by myself with him?"

"You might have liked beetles, too, for all I knew."

"Oh, come, Miss Beresford, I don't look like that."

"I can't tell by looks, you might have been very clever," she retorted, laughing so pleasantly that it was impossible to take the sally as seriously or rudely meant.

"Not in beetles, or in anything. Do you like only clever fellows?" he asked, with an earnestness that was more than complimentary.

"Oh no, indeed," May replied, with still deeper earnestness, and a sudden sadness, thinking of her hero, Hugh, of whose sudden disappearance and supposed death she had heard more than a year since. "Oh no, indeed; I don't think cleverness is anything—anything, I mean, compared with manliness."

"Of course it's not," replied Gower, greatly elated—"outside college, anyway. Fellows with their noses always in a book can't hunt, or ride, or shoot, or—or anything," he cried.

"I didn't mean that exactly," replied

May, with a far-away look in her eyes. "I meant a man who was brave and generous, and who couldn't say, or do, or think a mean thing."

Not only the sentiment itself, but the tone in which she uttered it, suggested to Gower that she had someone in her mind, who was certainly not himself. After a pause, however, he ventured to say:

"That kind of thing is all very well in a book; but it doesn't work, you know. A man like that would be sponged on all round."

May remained silent in the fear that any defence of her Quixotic ideal might suggest that she had, perhaps, drawn it from life; for girls, like misers, are always in morbid terror of giving a clue to their heart's treasure.

Gower was encouraged by her silence to follow up his prosaic demolition of her girlish heroics:

"If you're soft, everyone has a go in at you."

"Fatti di miele e ti mangieran le mosche—"Make yourself all honey and the flies will eat you up," she replied.

"I forget all my French," he said admiringly.

"I hope you've not forgotten all your Irish also," she said, laughing.

"My what?"

"Your Irish. I want to introduce to you an old Irish friend of mine. Con!"

"Yes, miss."

"This is Mr. Gower—Mr. Fred's friend."

Con touched his hat in a silent salute, taking a penetrating survey of the young gentleman the while. "He's come down to see a little of Yorkshire, Con," added May.

"I hope he'll like it, miss," Con answered dryly.

"It's nothing loike the ould counthry," said Gower, with a preposterous attempt at the brogue; an imitation that seemed to himself the very soul of wit.

"You have forgotten your Irish," May cried.

Con grinned also, and quoted rapidly in Irish a proverb to the effect that: "A monkey reminds you most that it is a monkey when it's mimicking a man."

"I thought yer honour knew a bit of Irish?"

"No, not a word. What did you say?"

"I haven't the English for it," Con answered, scratching his head perplexedly.

"I mean to go to Ireland some day," said Gower, with Olympian patronage.

"Thank yere honour," replied Con, touching his hat in grave acknowledgement.

"Only I hope I shan't be shot from behind a hedge!"

"Faix, I'd as lief be shot from behind a hedge as from behind a biler," Con retorted, in allusion to a recent English trades' union outrage. "It's all what wan's used to, I'm thinkin'."

"We're not so much used to it as you are, though."

"Deed, thin, that's thrue, yer honour; an' it's thrue that there's more weasels shot in Beechwood nor in Greengrove. For why? There's a dale more on 'em in Beechwood."

Gower, having no idea that Con could resent the suggestion that Irishmen were gratuitous assassins, was taken aback by what seemed to him the truculence of this retort. On the other hand Con, whose sensitiveness in such matters was kept raw by the daily taunts of his neighbours, was at once and irreclaimably prejudiced against "Master Fred's friend," by Gower's silly sallies. But then Con, having taken Fred's measure years since, was not likely to warm to one of his friends to begin with.

Gower having turned away in disgust, May walked back with him to the house.

"That's a dangerous man," he said, when they had got out of earshot of the subject of the remark.

"Con! He's the kindest creature in the world."

"What! A man who says landlords should be shot like weasels!"

"Only when they are weasels; as they are, you know, sometimes. But you vexed him by speaking of the Irish as assassins."

"Perhaps the cap fitted," he rejoined, laughing.

"But why should you fit it on if it did? You wouldn't like a foreigner to try a cap like that on you."

"Oh, I shouldn't mind."

"No, you wouldn't indeed," May replied laughing. "No cap ever fits an Englishman."

"But you're English yourself?"

"No; I can conceal it from you no longer. I'm Irish."

"But no one abuses the Irish more than your brother," cried Gower in some amazement.

"It's Queen's evidence then, for he's as bad as any of us."

"No one would take you to be Irish," Gower rejoined.

May curtsied low in acknowledgement of this stupendous compliment.

"You are not so well disguised," she answered, laughing; "but then the lion need not wear any other animal's skin, you know."

METAMORPHOSIS OF PANTOMIME.

It is generally admitted that everything in this world is more or less subject to change, but whether for better or worse is necessarily a matter of opinion. The truth of the time-honoured saying, "quot homines, tot sententiæ," struck me forcibly a few days ago, while listening to a discussion between two playgoers, one young and the other old, respecting the merits of a pantomime recently produced at a metropolitan theatre, which both had happened to see on the same evening.

The junior of the pair, an enthusiastic partisan of modern stage effect, maintained that nothing could surpass the elaborate getting up of the piece, extolling by turns the picturesque beauty of the scenery, the brilliancy of the costumes, and the constant succession, from the first scene to the last, of ingeniously contrived surprises, each more marvellous than its predecessor.

"All that is very well," retorted the elder of the two; "but I protest against such an incongruous hotch-potch being called a pantomime. Show and tinsel, I grant you, and more than enough of it; but where is the fun? Ten minutes of Joe Grimaldi, or even of Tom Matthews, were worth more than three or four hours of interminable processions and topical clap-traps, winding up with a poor apology for a harlequinade, which hardly one-third of the audience remain to see. In my time, sir, we wanted no fine scenery, ballet-girls, or electric light; twenty or thirty 'supers' sufficed to keep the business going, and, provided the clown was up to the mark, and could sing 'Hot Coddins' or 'Tippity-witchet,' we asked for nothing more."

To any one, indeed, old enough to remember what a Christmas pantomime was fifty or sixty years ago, the change from the primitive simplicity of its mechanical and decorative effects to the gorgeous spectacles of the present day, must appear sufficiently bewildering; but it may be questioned whether this species of entertainment has materially benefited by the alteration.

In his preface to the "Island of Jewels," and still more fully in his "Recollections,"

Planché has strongly protested—and not altogether without reason—against the practice at that time adopted by certain theatrical managers of sacrificing the piece to the accessories, and endeavouring to out-do each other in lavish and unnecessary expenditure.

"When harlequinades were indispensable at Christmas," he says, "the ingenious method was hit upon of dovetailing extravaganzas and pantomime. Instead of the two or three simple scenes which previously formed the opening of the pantomime, a long burlesque, the characters in which have nothing to do with those of the harlequinade, occupies an hour—sometimes much more—of the evening, and terminates with one of those elaborate and gorgeous displays which have acquired the name of 'transformation scenes'; after which what is by courtesy called the 'comic business,' is run through by the pantomimists, in three or four ordinary street or chamber scenes. How different were the Christmas pantomimes of my younger days! A pretty story—a nursery tale—dramatically told, in which 'the course of true love never did run smooth' formed the opening; the characters being a cross-grained old father, with a pretty daughter who had two suitors, one a poor young fellow whom she preferred, the other a wealthy fop, whose pretensions were, of course, favoured by the father. There was also a body-servant of some sort in the old man's establishment. At the moment when the young lady was about to be forcibly married to the fop, or on the point of eloping with the youth of her choice, the good fairy made her appearance, and, changing the lovers into harlequin and columbine, the father into pantaloon, and the servant into clown, the two latter, accompanied by the rejected fop, commenced the pursuit of the happy pair through a dozen or more cleverly-constructed scenes, in which the tricks and changes had a meaning, and were introduced as contrivances to favour the escape of the lovers when too closely pursued by their enemies. When the 'dark scene' came and the runaways were at length overtaken and seized, the protecting fairy reappeared, and, exacting the consent of the father to the marriage of the devoted couple, transported the whole party to what was really a grand last scene, the entire piece, from the rise to the fall of the curtain, having lasted little more than an hour."

It will be seen from the above description—a very exact one—that in those days

the expense of getting up a pantomime was comparatively trifling; the elaborate requirements of a modern "mise en scène" being entirely unknown. We learn from Grimaldi that Mother Goose, one of the greatest successes on record, "had neither gorgeous processions, nor gaudy banners, nor splendid scenery, nor showy dresses. There was not a single spangle used in the piece, with the exception of those which decked the harlequin's jacket; nevertheless, it was received with the most deafening shouts of applause, and played for ninety-two nights, being the whole remainder of the season." Nor do the tricks appear to have been by any means remarkable for novelty; a requisite, indeed, not regarded as essential by the audiences of the period, who liked them all the better for having laughed at them a dozen times before.

The staple jokes of a pantomime half a century ago—repeated year after year with the same mirth-provoking effect—may be briefly enumerated. The policeman, elongated by the mangling process into a shapeless mass; the "swell," in white trousers, whose nether extremities were immersed in a compound labelled "raspberry jam;" the foreign gentleman, whose coat was torn off his back by rival touts; the red-hot poker; and the inevitable buttered slide, prepared by the clown for the benefit of unwary promenaders. All these were in turn reproduced and roared at; the omission of any one of them being a solecism not to be entertained for a moment. Then there was, as a matter of course, the clock for harlequin to jump through, and be caught in a blanket held by the carpenters behind the scenes.

The pantomime was invariably preceded on the first night by a tragedy, usually George Barnwell, or some other "moral" production, to which nobody listened; the "gods" in the gallery testifying their impatience by an incessant uproar, which lasted until the leader of the orchestra gave the signal for the commencement of the overture, comprising a selection of the popular melodies of the day, such as "All Round my Hat," "Jim Crow," "Coal Black Rose," and "Nix my Dolly;" generally concluding with the "Dashing White Sergeant," or "Pop Goes the Weasel."

At half-price, the theatre was crammed to suffocation, and the entrance of every favourite performer was greeted with a salvo of applause, the most enthusiastic welcome falling to the share of the clown.

With regard to the pantomimes I have

seen my memory is sadly treacherous, almost the only one I remember being that of Harlequin and the Dragon of Wantley. Nor can I call to mind the patronymic of any one of the many columbines whose graceful evolutions successively enchanted me. Two of the harlequins, however, it is impossible to forget, namely, Bologna the younger—he was getting old then—and Ellar, both marvels of agility, and indisputably the best representatives of the motley hero within my recollection.

As for old Barnes, the famous pantaloon, he was unique and unsurpassable; the most perfect type imaginable of senile imbecility, receiving kicks and cuffs with placid resignation, and tottering about as if he perpetually expected to be knocked down and set up again like a ninepin. In the summer of 1830 he was engaged to play with an English company in Paris, but had hardly commenced operations at the Variétés, when the Revolution of July broke out, so that the expedition proved a disastrous failure.

Some few years later an amusing account of his journey and adventures in the "gay city" appeared in "Bentley's Miscellany," published from his own original manuscript, and very drolly illustrated. At one period of his life Barnes was evidently in straitened circumstances; for, in a letter addressed to a friend, and dated from the King's Bench, he upbraids the latter for not coming to see him, as "you know," he says, "I am always at home!"

The success, however, of the comic business mainly depended on the clown, and the first thought of an intelligent manager, as the close of the year drew nigh, was naturally to secure the best available talent for this important part. As long as Grimaldi remained on the stage he was, of course, "facile princeps," and defied all competition on the part of his rivals. Once, and once only, I saw him act, on the eventful night of his last performance at Drury Lane, January 27, 1828. The pantomime was "Harlequin Hoax," in one scene of which the celebrated clown appeared, and, being unable to stand owing to his infirmities, went through his part and sang his final song seated in a chair. With great difficulty he managed to speak his farewell address, and was then led off the stage—if I recollect rightly—by Harley. Although but a wreck of his former self, he still retained enough of his old humour to excite roars of laughter from a house crowded from pit to ceiling, and the close of his

speech was responded to by a display of enthusiasm such as I have rarely witnessed within the walls of a theatre.

Since then, I have seen some dozen of his successors, more or less popular in their day. I well remember little Paolo, C. J. Smith, Payne, and Flexmore; the latter being what may be termed a "muscular" pantomimist, but lacking drollery. He appeared at the Paris Vaudeville some thirty years ago, as the "Dancing Scotchman," and subsequently married Mdlle. Auriol, daughter of the inimitable clown of Franconi's circus, a vigorous dancer, but deficient in grace. Nor must I forget Tom Matthews, still living, I believe, at Brighton, who, in addition to his acknowledged merit in pantomime, greatly enhanced his reputation by a clever burlesque imitation of the fascinating Pauline Duvernay—Mrs. Lyne Stephens—in his mock Cachucha, at Drury Lane. Another excellent artist, in his peculiar line, was George Wieland, whose wonderful agility in Macfarren's "Devil's Opera," is still fresh in my memory, but whom I never had the opportunity of seeing as clown.

The only instance on record, as far as my knowledge goes, of a pantomime having been exclusively supported by amateurs, with the single exception of the columbine, Miss Rosina Wright, occurred in 1855, when "Harlequin Guy Faux," was produced at the Olympic Theatre. The idea originated with Albert Smith and his fellow-members of the Fielding Club; the object being to raise a sum of money for the benefit of their colleague, Angus Reach, then incapacitated by illness from all literary exertion. Tom Taylor wrote the prologue, in which Smith performed Catesby and sang a patter song; the characters in the harlequinade were chiefly sustained by friends of the invalid. So great was the success, that by desire of the Queen, the performance was subsequently repeated at Drury Lane.

Little by little, the modest requirements which had so long satisfied our forefathers have been entirely thrown into the shade, owing to the increasing mania for spectacular magnificence and scenic display; the public becoming each year more exacting, and the managers perpetually striving, as Planché says, "to outdo their former out-doings," and out-Heroding Herod in their efforts to retain their supremacy. That the result is "ultra-gorgeous," it is impossible to deny; but as far as amusement goes, it may be doubted

if we have gained by the change. The hearty roars of laughter, which once saluted the quips and cranks of the sausage-filching, mischief-loving clown, have given way to the listless indifference of the "masher"; while the harlequinade, formerly the prominent feature of the evening's entertainment, is now rapidly hurried through, and, probably, in the opinion of the majority of modern playgoers, might advantageously be dispensed with altogether.

WITHIN AN ACE.

A HOT summer's day was drawing to its close, and the sultry, stagnant air was stirred with the faintest possible breeze as I sat on the Rhine Quay at Cologne, waiting for the arrival of the steamer for Rotterdam. Not that I was going to Rotterdam, but to Dordrecht, a quaint old Netherlandish town, where I expected to join my mother and sister. The latter had been sketching all the summer among the old towns of Holland; she has an enthusiasm for the Dutch school, an enthusiasm that is hardly shared by her brother, who had deserted the sketching party and taken a line of his own, leading him up the Rhine, and through the recesses of the Black Forest.

The Rhine boat was late, hours late—a thing I had no reason to grumble at, for my train had also been an hour or two late, and had the boat been punctual I should have missed it. And there was no hardship in waiting. There was the Rhine in front, broad and majestic, with its strong impetuous current and swirling eddies, while gay Dutch barges floated down, or were anchored in the stream, mixed up with huge timber rafts; and great noisy tugs laboured up against the stream, with long strings of barges in their train. There, too, was the bridge of boats, its dark undulating line running from shore to shore, and beyond the bridge long reaches of the river stretched out to the low horizon in a doubtful kind of haze. Out of the haze every now and then came a steamer with glittering lights, hooting and whistling on its way, and then the bridge of boats would part in the middle, and the steamer come panting down. But not the right one. Darkness came on, lights glittered everywhere on the stream, stars glimmered through the soft haze; but still no Rhine boat.

Hitherto I had been the only passenger waiting on the quay; but now two ladies appeared, attended by an old grizzled servant who carried their luggage—only one light portmanteau. Assured that they were still in time for the boat, the travellers seated themselves on the same pile of packing-cases, where I had already found a comfortable nook, and dismissed their attendant, who saluted them respectfully and departed. But the man as he passed me, gave me a strange, searching glance, that seemed full of covert hostility. I met his glance with a smile that perhaps was a little supercilious, for the man seemed to be lashed into rage, as he half-turned towards me, and then, thinking better of his purpose, whatever it might have been, slunk away, muttering and probably cursing under his breath. Then I looked curiously at the ladies, who had been attended by this cross-grained fellow. They were mother and daughter, no doubt. The elder woman had a handsome, clever face, which time and probably trouble had rendered stern and worn. The daughter resembled the mother; she was strikingly handsome, but there was a worn and sorrowful look in her face, and her beautiful dark grey eyes seemed charged with unshed tears.

Before long I felt myself in turn the subject of the elder lady's scrutiny, and strange to say, my appearance excited the same antipathy as with the serving-man. A stern, indignant glance was hurled in my direction, and then the mother turned to her daughter with a few earnest words. The girl started violently and our eyes met. Never shall I forget that look: the love, reproach, despair, that shone in those beautiful eyes, the magnetic influence of which seemed to penetrate my very soul.

Still it was so evident that here was a case of mistaken identity, for the ladies were absolute strangers to me, that I determined to clear up the matter, and rising and saluting the pair, I made some commonplace remark in French to the effect that the boat was very late. The sound of my voice, or perhaps the English accent of my French, seemed to break the spell of some delusion. The elder lady replied quickly with a smile, and in excellent English: "Ah, you are English after all; we thought we recognised a compatriot, formerly known to us. The likeness is remarkable, is it not, Olga?" turning to her daughter. The girl replied with a simple gesture of assent, as if she could not trust herself to speak.

Her face had lost the glow of excitement, and had relapsed into its former pathetic calm. The ice was broken. I was soon engaged in an animated conversation with the elder lady, and the daughter was occasionally drawn in to join the talk. They were evidently cultivated people, excellent linguists, and acquainted with general European literature. In their society time flew so rapidly, that it was something of a surprise when our boat actually drew up to the quay, just as the midnight hour was tolled out from the great Domkirche, and echoed from all around.

The steamer was crammed with fruit-baskets, piled high above the deck, leaving hardly standing room for passengers, of whom, however, there were very few. Carrying the light portmanteau of my companions, as well as my own, I led the way to the fore-part of the vessel, where a space had been kept clear of fruit-baskets. The night was calm and genial, and we agreed that it would be pleasanter to camp out on deck than to descend into the saloon, and, arranging rugs, and shawls, camp stools and portmanteaus, we settled ourselves comfortably to continue our talk. Soon the boat was on the move, and we passed away from the twinkling lights of the City, and from the roar and rattle of the trains on the great latticed railway bridge, into the gloom and calm of the silent river.

For a time we looked back upon the huge cathedral towers, touched here and there by silvery flakes of moonlight; but these soon disappeared in the mist of night, and the low and distant shores were lost altogether in the hazy gloom.

Thus we travelled on, cut adrift as it were from the every-day world—as far as sight and sounds were concerned, we might have been sailing half-way between earth and sky. And thus we three, who had been thrown together haphazard on this summer night, seemed loosened altogether from all sense of earthly responsibility, and fell into the vague and dreamy talk, discussing and questioning all kinds of theories touching heaven and earth, and the mysteries and problems of life and death.

Hours passed quickly away; the light of dawn was already gilding the turbid waters of the river, when we were conscious of an unusual bustle on board. No doubt we were approaching the German frontier, where there is generally some trifling

Custom House formality to go through. But this night something more than ordinary was in progress. A strong party of German officials had come on board, and, with rattling arms and gleaming lanterns, were making a minute survey of all the passengers. My travelling companions exchanged glances of alarm. The chief of the officials was approaching us, accompanied by the "conductor" of the steamer.

"Ah, you have some Russian passengers on board," said the former, in the convinced manner of a German official.

The elder of my companions put her hand appealingly upon my arm.

"We are lost, my son, unless you can save us."

The Prussian officer, tall and stiff, was standing over us, while his companion held the lamp.

"This is an English party!" said the latter apologetically, as if he were introducing some poor wandering people to the notice of a king.

"Ah!" said the German, sniffing the air suspiciously and majestically. "How do we know that?"

How, indeed! I might plunge into perjury fathoms deep, but could I ever convince this sceptical, iron-framed man that I and my "compagnons de voyage" were of the same nationality? He would insist on examination of papers, baggage, and all the rest; and I should be brought to shame, and probably haled off to the guard-house to share the fate of my female friends, whatever that might be. And yet one soft, appealing look from Olga made me think that all this would be endurable in such company. And then suddenly it occurred to me, I have a passport! Yes; my mother, who is an old-fashioned traveller, insisted on our having a foreign-office passport in our joint names when we started on our travels, and there it remained untouched in the note-case, where I had first placed it. I sprang to my feet, and politely saluted the official.

"Pardon me, I have a passport."

"Ha, ha! goot, goot! he has a passport," said the German, his features relaxing as he examined the document carefully by the light of the lantern. "Ah yes, the Graf von Salisbury," he remarked approvingly, as he scanned the signature. "Very goot, man. So, so, Esquiar, and Mistress Esquiar, and Miss Esquiar—very goot."

It was so much in accordance with the

officials' sense of fitness, this lucky passport of mine, that the iron man at once relaxed. Yes, he became polite, effusive, especially to the ladies, who bore the ordeal with wonderful composure.

But it was a great relief when the steamer slackened speed, and the high official and his subordinates disappeared over the vessel's side. Still none of us spoke till the appearance of sundry homely, comfortable fellows in the uniform of the Dutch Custom House assured us that we were fairly over the frontier.

Then the elder lady, before I could stop her, raised my hand to her lips and kissed it.

"You have saved us from death, or what is perhaps worse, the prolonged torture of a convict's life. The Germans, had they caught us, would have sent us back to the prisons of the Czar."

Yes, they were revolutionists, these pleasing, interesting women—refugees from Russia. Husband, son, lover, all had joined the ranks of the secret brotherhood.

The head of the family, Count Ipsiloff, was an exile. The son had died upon the scaffold. The fate of the lover was still uncertain. He was Olga's lover, this young man, whose features so strongly resembled my own, a certain Count Loris Malakoff, noble, rich, and generous, who had sacrificed everything for the cause.

And yet some of the brotherhood suspected him, and, as a test, he was selected for an enterprise of great peril, the nature of which we need not enquire about. But, on the eve of the appointed day, Loris disappeared; the clue to the whole conspiracy was in the hands of the police; wholesale arrests were made; numerous executions followed, and among them that of Olga's brother, Stephen. But of Loris nothing was known. Only a terrible report had been circulated, on the authority of a prison official who was a secret sympathiser, to the effect that Loris had been the traitor, that his heart had failed him at the last, and that he had given himself up to the police, and revealed the whole conspiracy.

It was also said that he would be soon liberated, and, to save him from the vengeance of the brotherhood, conveyed secretly, in disguise, probably in the character of an Englishman, as far as London, where, lost in the immensity of the crowd, he might best hope to escape the fate that would surely dog him as long as he lived.

Hence, when the Russian ladies saw the very fac-simile of their former friend on the quay, the sight seemed to confirm the worst suspicions that had been entertained about him.

Olga loved him, but she would rather that he should be dead than so dishonoured. She had always refused to believe that he had been a traitor.

"Now," concluded Madame Ipsiloff, "I am hoping to join my husband in Holland. He is growing old, alas! like myself, and has been compelled to retire from the active list of the revolutionary band."

They proposed to take ship for America, there to end their days in poverty and exile—they who had been once rich, honoured, and happy.

All this, whispered rather than spoken in low, earnest tones, produced a profound feeling of sorrow and depression. But just then the sun, which was not far above the horizon, burst out from among the clouds that had hitherto concealed it, and lit up all the surrounding scene. Olga roused herself from her attitude of mournful depression, and, as if inspired by the sunbeams, like the vocal Egyptian statue, burst into song. She had a charming fresh contralto voice, and the old Russian hymn that she sung, addressed to the rising sun, was full of pathos and charm.

Soon after the town of Nimegen came in sight, quaintly perched upon a solitary bluff by the river bank. A number of people were awaiting the steamer on the quay, and, among them, one who raised his hands and made a peculiar signal in the air. "Ah, we are awaited here; good friend, we must part, never to meet again." A hurried leave-taking followed; warm pressure of the hand, fervid good wishes. They were gone, and left behind them a blank sense of loss and pain—these people, whom I had known only for a short summer's night.

After my companions had left, I remember little about the voyage down the Rhine, till towards the afternoon, when the conductor warned me, asleep on one of the sofas in the saloon, that Dordrecht was close at hand. Here I met with a disappointment. The porter of the hotel was awaiting me with a letter from my mother. Bad news had come from England—my sister Bell's "fiancé" had broken or otherwise damaged his leg, and my mother had started with her for home early that morning, by way of Brussels, Paris, and Dover. Well, there was no need for me to follow them in haste. I

would go on to Rotterdam by the steamer, and take the boat for Harwich on the following day. It was not till we had left the old town far behind, and had entered the maze of waters about Rotterdam—crowded with steamers and gay barges—that I remembered that I was vexatiously short of money. I had relied on getting a supply from my mother; and now I found, after searching all my pockets, only just enough, with a very trifling margin, to pay my fare home.

In a general way there would be no particular hardship in spending a night out of doors and avoiding the hotel bill in that way. But I was overwhelmed with sleep, having been travelling incessantly for several days, and I longed for nothing so much as to stretch my limbs on a comfortable bed. Well, there were, no doubt, many decent places at Rotterdam where one could get a bed for a couple of shillings. I took the "conductor" of the steamer into confidence, and he at once gave me the card of a kind of boarding-house, where the charges would be quite within my margin.

Presently we were alongside the Boompjeo, that pleasantest of quays, with its avenues of trees, its solid old-fashioned buildings, and lively bustling surroundings. The steamer was at once invaded by a crowd of porters, touts, and other nondescripts, and one of these latter seized my portmanteau, and made me his chosen prey. I gave the man the card of my hotel, and grunting out "Ja-ja!" he led the way to the shore, waving his hand in the air as a signal to somebody on the quay, no doubt, that he had secured a prize. Half-a-dozen hands were held up in different directions among the crowd, and as we passed along the quay my attendant was joined by two other men who helped him to carry the portmanteau. We passed along several narrow, tortuous streets, we crossed a canal or two of dark and uninviting appearance, and at last turned into a gloomy handsomely-carved gateway, and stopped before a heavy, massive door, let into a kind of arched recess adorned with carvings of floral and heraldic emblems. The door was opened by an old woman, with an elaborately-wrinkled face, who was busy with brooms and mops, and pails. My conductor led the way upstairs—up a narrow, curving staircase all done in red distemper, and reminding one of the companion-ladder of a ship—up we went higher and higher, the stairs becoming steeper, narrower, and more

gloomy at every stage. We came to a pause at last, and, pushing open a door, my porter led the way into a large, bare room—bare of furniture that is, for the ceiling was richly decorated, and the panelled walls were adorned with fruit and flowers finely carved, but much hacked and defaced. There were tables all along the room, covered with oilcloth, where one or two groups, seemingly of emigrants, were sitting with bags of provender beside them, drinking beer out of huge mugs, and discussing bread and onions, cheese and garlic, with much apparent relish.

In one corner of the room sat a family group of care-worn homely people, who seemed to be in charge of the establishment. A woman was mending stockings; another was at work with a sewing-machine; children were busy over their lesson books; and a pale and studious-looking youth, in spectacles, was making entries in a big book. To this last my conductor addressed himself, evidently on the subject of my sojourn there. I should have liked to join in the conversation, but the pale youth spoke only Dutch. Thus I was very much at the mercy of my nondescript porter from the quay, who seemed to be taking "carte blanche" as to arrangements for my reception. The young man in spectacles looked puzzled, undecided; but at last he handed a key to the porter, who forthwith, in a triumphant manner, shouldered my portmanteau and led the way up more flights of stairs, ever growing darker and steeper.

Then we came to a really handsome chamber, panelled and carved like the other, but much more elaborately furnished: velvet couches, gilded chairs, mirrors, sconces, clocks, all kinds of bric-à-brac cluttered the room, leaving just space for a table and a few practicable chairs, and two massive box bedsteads, each occupied by two enormous feather beds. These last two pieces of furniture attracted my attention most. There was not the vestige of any kind of accessories in the way of sheets, pillows, or bolsters; but the feather beds were deliciously soft and inviting. Dismissing my managing porter with a gratuity which, for a wonder, he received without grumbling, I locked the door with the huge key, and, kicking off my shoes, jumped into the middle of the feather beds. Next moment I was fast asleep.

I awoke with a start, and a strange nightmarish feeling about me. It was midnight, and all the clocks in the room were chiming

the hour, one after another, in every variety of tone. But late as it was, the narrow street below was full of life and noise. Never had I heard such a babel of sounds rising up in the middle of the night, such shouting and laughter; street music, songs from sailors' taverns, a roar of voices everywhere—everywhere, that is, but in this particular house, which seemed as silent as the grave.

My room must have been seven floors above the street; but the houses opposite were equally tall, and every floor of them was lighted up and wide awake, and doing its best to swell the general uproar. Just in face of my window a supper party was going on, all in full dress, with choice dishes, and flasks of wine and liqueurs of every imaginable shape. The sight made me hungry; I was weak indeed and exhausted from hunger, for I had tasted nothing since breakfast, and yet I had probably slept away all chance of getting anything to eat.

It was a strange chamber, this of mine; there was no bell-pull or other means of communicating with the world below—plenty of gilt chandeliers, but no candles, nor gas, nor paraffin lamp, nor even matches. There was just light enough from the street to show me the way about the room, and I made for the door, intending to rouse somebody to give me supper, or, anyhow, lights. The room opened upon a narrow landing, and another door should have given entrance to the stairs, but that door was locked. Then I began to think that I was in a trap.

Yet surely they were honest people, those down below. The mild young man in spectacles, the industrious house mother, had not the stamp of thief or murderer on their brows. That locking up was accidental perhaps, or we will say a custom of the country. I shook the door, but it was firm and solid. I listened intently at the crevices. Not a sound was to be heard. And yet—yes—as I listened, I heard from far below, the measured tramp of footsteps on the stairs. It was a ghostly eerie sound, muffled and soft, as the footsteps mounted stage by stage. The sound scarcely increased; footsteps muffled and soft, and yet with a regular rhythmic beat, as if many were treading a kind of military march. Perhaps they were ghosts after all, the burgher guard out of some old picture, marching to supper in their former quarters, or Rembrandt's night watch, who had stepped boldly out of the canvas.

The footsteps stopped at the landing just beneath mine, and no doubt passed into the room immediately below. After all, it was perhaps only a friendly party who had come to sup together. Anyhow, they could have nothing to do with me. I returned to my room, locked the door and took a seat by the window, feeling a sense of companionship and security in the noisy street, and the lights from people's windows. I think I must have dozed in my chair, for when I roused myself, the street had become perfectly quiet; lights had gone out, and the whole city seemed to sleep.

Three o'clock rang out, most dismal and depressing of all the short hours. I could hear no movement in the floor below; but then the timbers and beams were thick and strong, and little sound could penetrate. Then I certainly heard a sound, dull, yet distant, as if a number of people, sitting in company, had risen simultaneously, slightly pushing back their chairs. The noise somehow appalled me. It was as if a jury had risen and were about to deliver their verdict. But what had that to do with me?

But there was a decided stir and movement below, and, creeping to the door to listen, surely I heard footsteps ascending the stairs to my landing. Not so many footsteps this time, but still enough. The door of the staircase was unlocked and opened cautiously, and footsteps advanced softly to the door of my chamber. From my post of observation I could hear the slow, regular breathing of five or six men. After which, there sounded a knock upon the door, gentle yet distinct.

"What is your business?" I demanded in a voice I tried to render firm.

"Ouvrez," was bellowed forth for sole answer.

The knock was twice repeated; a regular "sommation," in fact—and the delay gave me the opportunity of hastily piling some furniture as a barricade; but after the third summons someone threw himself heavily against the door. The screws of the lock gave way, and the door flew open, scattering my barricade in all directions. I made for the window with the wild notion of raising an alarm, when I was seized, flung down, and knelt upon by half-a-dozen men.

But, after the first attack, no further violence was used than was necessary to secure me. A lamp was brought into the room, and while held in the chair by two or three pairs of powerful hands, a number

of men came forward, one by one, and examined my features attentively.

They were dark-bearded men with strange, earnest, wistful eyes—not cruel-looking men, but rather tender and humane, you would have said—but they all shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders as they passed by, as if to say that here was a hopeless case. The last of all to pass me in review was one whose face I recalled at once as that of the old serving-man at Cologne.

Then I understood what all this meant. These conspirators mistook me for Count Loris, the traitor and spy, whom I was said to resemble so much. This man from Cologne had no doubt come on by rail, in much less time than the steamer had taken, and had prepared his friends for my arrival. And then this trap had been laid.

But not for me, I recognised joyfully, and cried out with full assurance:

"Ah, you are all mistaken, gentlemen; I am not the man you seek. I am an Englishman. . . . See my passport."

To my horror, the only reply was a general pitying smile.

"We knew that you would say that," replied one. "Ah, that you should have sunk so low."

Protests, threats, entreaties, all were of no avail.

They did not leave me long in doubt as to their purpose. Choosing a ponderous beam with a strong hook affixed to it, convenient for their purpose, a noose was soon dangling therefrom.

"Courage, my friend," cried one of the men who held me, feeling that my frame trembled. "Courage, it is but a short journey, and will soon be over."

Short as the journey may be, it is still a dreadful one. I tremble even now as I think of that moment, and yet, terrible as it was, I only sought to prolong it.

"Give me half-an-hour to prepare for death," I begged, "if you insist on murdering me."

It was acknowledged that the request was reasonable, and those about me seated themselves apart, while one or two of the humbler members of the party knelt down and repeated a prayer or two in Russian.

The time of delay passed away, and again there was a general movement in the room, as all present rose to their feet.

Just at this moment a rosy streak of dawn flushed through the windows, lighting up the whole grim, fearful scene; a beam of sunlight stretched athwart the room,

and again, as if inspired by the morning light, a clear, sweet voice from far below trilled out a stanza of the strange, wild Russian hymn.

"It is Olga," I cried; "bring her to me."

Said a grave voice:

"Yes, that is just; they loved each other, let them bid an eternal adieu."

Then I knew that I was saved, although I heard no more; for, overcome by all the terrible experiences of the night, all my perceptions seemed to desert me. When I came to myself I found that two women were bending over me, chafing my hands, bathing my temples, and moistening my lips with some aromatic cordial.

"He will do now," said the voice of the elder Russian lady. "Come, Olga, they are waiting."

"Adieu," whispered Olga, bending over me. "Forgive us and forget us." And then she softly pressed my forehead with her lips.

"Adieu for ever," and she passed away.

That evening I found myself in my mother's drawing-room in Kensington, giving her, and my sister, and her lover, a full account of my Continental adventures; but keeping carefully to myself my connection with the Revolutionary party.

The other day, by the way, I came across the old serving-man accidentally in the Strand. He stared as he recognised me.

"You need be under no apprehensions now, monsieur," he said; "all has been cleared up about poor Count Loris. He died in prison, and would not speak a word. And we now revere him as one of the noblest of our martyrs; and Mademoiselle Olga is happy, quite happy."

But the old rogue would not reveal the secret of her whereabouts, and was quite impervious to bribes.

THE TRUE "POOR MAN'S FRIEND."

I HAVE no doubt the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury had often read Blake's exquisite poem:

When my mother died I was very young;
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry "weep, weep, weep!"
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved; so I
said:

"Hush, Tom, never mind it; for when your head's
bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white
hair."

I should like to quote the whole; and along with it to give extracts from what Charles Lamb said about chimney-sweepers. But Lord Shaftesbury helped so many sufferers besides the climbing boys, that it is best to begin with him, and to see how he grew to be a sort of English Saint Vincent de Paul, thoroughly practical; personally "narrow" in doctrine, yet never letting doctrine stand between him and a chance of doing good; and, above all, full of what the author of a book, "*Ecce Homo*," which he could never appreciate, well calls "the enthusiasm of humanity."

Heredity means something in men, no less than in dogs and horses. To belong to an "old family" is a privilege, for it ought to mean that culture, and tact, and true gentleness have got into the blood, so to speak.

The Shaftesburys are an old family; some of them have been good, some bad. Of John Cooper, of Rockborne, near the "three shire stone," between Dorset, Hants, and Wilts, it was written in 1619: "He is very lovely both in face and person, of a moderate stature, of an easy and affable nature, fair and just in all affairs." This Hampshire Squire married the daughter and heiress of Sir Antony Ashley, of Saint Giles's, Cranbourne (Macaulay, in the "*Armada*," talks of "*Cranbourne's Oaks*") who had been knighted at the taking of Cadiz, in 1597. Of Ashley we read: he was for wisdom, courage, experience, skill in weapon, agility and strength of body, scarcely paralleled in his age; of a large mind in all his actions, his person of the lowest."

Their son was the first Earl Shaftesbury, short, like his grandfather; weakly, like his mother; yet so energetic that at Exeter College, he "became the leader of all the rough young men, raw-boned Cornish and Devon gentlemen, famous for courage and strength, which in great numbers yearly came to that College, and did there maintain in the schools coursing against Christ Church, the most numerous college in Oxford."

"Coursing" had once meant a trial of wit, a leash of lads being slipped to cap verses, or to worry one another with dialectical questions; but, in the decay of learning, it had come to be a sort of "tug of war," in which—since the Shaftesbury side often came off victorious—generalship counted for at least as much as strength. He was a reformer, too, and managed to get rid of the ugly custom of "tucking freshmen," that is, "the seniors would with the right thumb nail, left long on purpose,

grate off all the skin from lip to chin, and then make the sufferers drink a glass of salt and water."

Married at eighteen to Lord Keeper Coventry's daughter, the first Earl became an active politician, changing sides so often and so audaciously, that no one has been able to suggest motives for such unparalleled conduct.

Royalist and Republican by turns, he became, after the Restoration, successively a courtier, a patriot, a member of the Cabal, a fierce exclusionist. Dryden is very hard upon him in his "*Absalom and Achitophel*;" yet even he bears strong testimony to his incorruptibility:

The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
None sat in Israel's courts with hands more clean:
Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress,
Swift of despatch and easy of access.

The great blot on his character, of course, is that either party or conviction led him to side with Titus Oates; but in this the almost unanimous voice of England was with him. Indeed, one of the strangest facts of our history is how the whole nation was for a time deluded by this, to us, nowadays, most transparent imposture.

On the other hand, Shaftesbury had a great share in passing the Habeas Corpus Act; and the sober-minded Locke, who lived in close intimacy with him for twenty years, forms a very different estimate of him from that of the rash Lord Macaulay. Lady Russell calls him "that great faulty human being in whom the faults are indissolubly blended with the greatness."

Shaftesbury was fond of quoting Raleigh's grand saying: "Whosoever shall follow truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth"; so, at any rate, he claimed to have conscience, and not party, for his guide.

Of his three wives, the one who bore him an heir was a Cecil, that is, of royal blood through John of Gaunt, so that the friend of climbing boys and trappers and hurriers and mill hands, the organiser of shoeblack brigades, the enemy of oppression and wrong in every form, could truly claim kin with the Plantagenets. His only child was weak in mind and body, and was married at seventeen, Locke choosing the wife—the requisites being "good blood, good person and constitution, above all, good education, and a character as remote as possible from that of a Court or town-bred lady."

Dorothy Manners, third daughter—aged sixteen—of the first Duke of Rutland, was

found to suit all these requirements. No doubt they were married thus early lest the weakly boy might die, and the estates pass to some distant cousin. Their son, Locke's pupil, author of the "Characteristics," posed as a philosopher—"the boldest Englishman who has a claim to the title," said Voltaire. His doctrine, that "ridicule is the test of truth," would commend him to the sneering Frenchman.

Of the fifth Earl, the "Gentleman's Magazine" says, "his poor neighbours, whether in the adjacent towns or villages, are fed, clothed, or comforted with a rare benevolence hereditary in the Shaftesburys."

So much for heredity, to which we all owe so much more than most of us imagine. Now for the training which prepared the seventh Earl for his life's work. Distinctly, it was not good. The sombre, sad look, which somewhat marred a face and figure otherwise surpassingly graceful, was a survival of a boyhood cheered by no parental love, and blighted in what the sufferer afterwards described as "an aristocratic Dotheboys. . . . Never was there such a wicked, filthy school before or since; and the treatment was starvation and cruelty." His father was taken up with public life; his mother, a fascinating, fashion-loving daughter of the house of Marlborough, wholly neglected him. Holidays were a burden; and school, with its bullying and its Dr. Horne, he dreaded.

At school he was underfed; at home, when his parents were away, he and his sisters were "times without number kept without sufficient food, and lay awake whole winter nights, suffering from cold and hunger." It is a terrible thought that a boy of any rank should "regard even his schoolmaster and the school bullies with less fear than he regarded his parents." The only use of recording this is to show the connection between suffering and sympathy. Lord Shaftesbury could feel not only for, but with all, especially with the young, because, as young Antony Ashley Cooper, he had, for five wretched years from the time he was seven, known loneliness, and cold, and hunger.

At Harrow a new life opened for him; and now, too, his holidays were no longer spent in Grosvenor Square or Richmond, but at the old seat, Wimborne St. Giles, with Cranborne Chase, and its twelve thousand deer—they lasted on till 1828—and six lodges, each with its ranger, within easy reach.

Here he took to natural history; indeed his bent was always scientific, but at the call of philanthropy he stifled all these youthful likings. His religion, a marked feature, he owed chiefly to Maria Millis, the housekeeper, who taught him prayers and hymns which he remembered and used to his latest day, and whose death nearly broke his boy's heart. Her watch, a legacy to him, was the only one he ever wore.

At Oxford he read hard. His tutor's first question had been:

"Do you intend to take a degree?"

"I cannot say, but I will try," was the answer.

He got a first class, of which he says:

"I've had many surprises in life, but I never was more surprised than at the result of my exam."

It showed self-denial in one who had so long been kept out of all the amusements of which most lads in his station have too much. The same power of application he showed five years later, when he learnt Welsh with such good purpose that he was made a Bard and a Druid, and wrote Welsh articles in the "Cambrian Quarterly."

Of course, a man of such birth too, a great pet of the Duke of Wellington, was sure of office; but for some time delicate health kept him in the background.

In 1828, he was put on the Indian Board of Control, and signalled his two years of office by lifting up his voice against "suttee." His colleagues called him mad; to threaten such a time-honoured practice was to lay the axe to the root of the "pagoda tree;" but his friend, Lord W. Bentinck, was sent out as Governor-General, and he at once, with a stroke of his pen, abolished this "domestic institution."

His first philanthropic effort was to amend the Lunacy Laws. The days were not long past when Sydney Smith in the "Edinburgh Review," vol. xxviii, apologised for the disgust he must cause his readers by the horrible details he had to quote, and when "rotatory chairs" and "baths of surprise" were, with flogging, among the accepted remedies. Lord Ashley's maiden speech was in support of Gordon's Bill for regulating asylums. His diary tells of growing popularity with all classes, and of dinners with the East India Company to which he went wholly counter to the advice of "that silly brag, Lord Wallace," who said: "Keep 'em at a distance; don't let it be known they have access to you." "Stuff! If a man be honest, I'm proud of

his acquaintance." Things are changed since it was "remarkable condescension" for an Earl's son to be civil to City merchants, and since a poor witling like Theodore Hook could raise a laugh by protesting he never went east of Temple Bar.

Of course Lord Ashley was a Tory—spent sixteen thousand pounds on his election for Dorset, and voted against the Reform Bill; yet, even in 1831 he began to be called "the working man's friend," by those who saw that votes were not the chief thing for people, who had only one public school for the poor in an area of thirty-two square miles, including the towns of Oldham and Ashton; whose mill-schools were a farce—"kept by engine-man, slubber, book-keeper, or by any of their wives for the two hours enjoined by law"—and whose Sunday schools were turned into places for teaching simply the three "R's." Since 1806, when we gave the "coup-de-grâce" to Indian cotton manufactures, the demand for our cottons had multiplied a hundredfold. Machinery was invented to meet this demand; and the comparatively independent hand-loom weaver gave place to the "slave of the mill." The men, if they grumbled, could be turned adrift; for water-power would do most of the heavy work, and the machinery could be almost wholly managed by children. And these children—they were swept up—bought up—from the workhouses all over the island and sent to Lancashire in barge-loads, and there kept working in relays day and night, sleeping in foul berths saturated with oil, kicked and beaten by the overlooker, working for fourteen hours a day in a temperature of from 70° to 90°, with no redress if maimed by the wheels, against which, in their half-sleep, they often fell.

Lord Ashley was greatly moved by the story of their wrongs; but his Factory Bill was a very long time in being passed. He had been anticipated to some extent by the father of the great Sir Robert Peel, who, in 1802, championed the cause of these poor parish apprentices, insisting that they should be clothed, fed, and instructed, and should not work more than twelve hours a day. His Bill was no sooner passed than, instead of taking apprentices, the mill-owners simply hired for wages the children of the towns, in which, after steam had made them independent of water power—found mostly in lonely valleys—the mills began to be built.

These children, unprotected by any Act, they could treat as they pleased; and, in

consequence, it was necessary in 1819 to forbid the employment of children under nine, and to order that none under sixteen should work more than twelve hours a day. But still children were employed—certificates of age, for one thing, being falsified by parents anxious for their children's wages—and a further Bill, passed in 1831, was so amended as to be worthless. The "Ten Hours' Bill" was first introduced in 1831, by Mr. T. Sadler, M.P. for Newark. Then Newark was disfranchised; and Lord Ashley took up the work.

It was time to do something, for the evil was a crying one. Southey the poet, for instance, went over one of Marshall's mills. "The children look very delicate," he remarked. "Yes," answered the manager, "few live to be twenty; the air is always so full of flew." "He spoke thus," adds Southey, "with as little compunction as a General would in calculating the probable loss of life in a campaign."

A Commission was appointed at the request of the mill-owners, with the view of shunting the Bill. The workmen were indignant. Richard Oastler, their champion, urged them to refuse to give evidence before the Commission. At Leeds, three thousand children paraded about, each with the motto "Ten Hours' Bill" in their caps. Lord Ashley wished his Bill extended to all sorts of mills; but Government exerted its influence against him, and carried in 1833 a sham measure of its own, based on the report of its Commission. Oastler, in despair, went to the Tories, pointing out that if they would pass the "Ten Hours' Bill," all the Reformers in England could not touch them; but there was no such thing in those days as Tory-Radicalism, or "dishing the Whigs"; so no one would listen to him. Poor Oastler, he felt what a shame it was that "the claims of labour" should be made the shuttlecock of party.

Oastler pointed out how the Government Act was a mere farce, as was proved by one hundred and seventy-seven convictions in a year among one thousand nine hundred and forty mills, though most of the offences were passed over, the mill-owners being in many cases the magistrates. One typical case was reported, in which some boys had been kept at work for thirty-four hours in the cellar of a Yorkshire mill, where the air was so foul that workmen tied handkerchiefs round their mouths before going in. The mill-owners threatened: "If the Ten Hours Bill passes, thirty-five thousand children will be thrown out of work;" and

Cobden sided with them, speaking with strange bitterness of "the mock philanthropy of Tory landowners, who are so anxious for the factory hands and yet won't relax the Corn Laws." So did Hume (who by-and-by supported the Colliery Bill), declaring the Bill was only a party manoeuvre. So did Lord J. Russell: "It means diminished wages and starvation"; and O'Connell—who vainly hoped Lord John would help him about Ireland—went with him. Bright, too, would rather workmen should force their employers to do the right thing, instead of "trusting to the emasculating aid of Parliament." Peel, too, was against it; and so the Bill was lost, Lord Ashley getting a hundred and eleven votes, Government a hundred and nineteen; and the old delusive system went on, inspectors giving notice of their visits; and, as Charles Dickens said in an admirable letter to Lord Ashley in 1838, sixty-nine hours a week being not thought too much for an English child in a stifling mill, by a House which had limited the negro's open-air labour to forty-five hours. Peel does not come out well from this Factory Bill agitation; Lord Ashley constantly complains of "Peel's flummery, and want of principle." But then few men carried—as Lord Ashley did—his conscience into politics. He changed, too, his opinion of the Duke of Wellington, to whom, when young, he had been deeply attached.

The Duke, he had already found, was a hard man; but he was not prepared to get such a note as this: "Mr. Stevens* has thought fit to leave at Apsley House some petitions about the Factory Act: they will be found with the porter." He found, too, that "the Evangelical religionists are not to be relied on. Humanity gets at least as much help from 'men of the world' as from those who claim to be unworldly."

The Press was almost all on his side; the "Morning Chronicle" helping vigorously, the "Times" denouncing the dilatoriness of the Government, and stigmatising the frequent "counts out" as "trickery of the grossest kind."

The Government Act turned out, as Oastler had foretold, a farce. The law was systematically broken—in 1838, eighty-three thousand pounds were paid in fines; Lord Ashley's attempt to bring silk mills under its jurisdiction was thrown out, so

was his motion to reduce "young persons'" weekly hours from sixty-nine to fifty-eight. Mr. Pease, the Darlington Quaker, violently opposed this, declaring that, if it passed he must either close his mills, or torture and overdrive the children.

Meanwhile, fresh facts came out; the Nottingham lace mills, for instance, were found to be the most cruelly managed of any; some of them were open all night, the children being kept lying on the floors, weary and worn out, so as to be ready when wanted. In silk mills girls of six were working ten hours a day—so small some of them, that they had to be set on stools to reach their work. Lord Ashley's article in the "Quarterly" (1840) helped to keep up public interest in what the scorners called, "mercy by statute"; it proved that the awful predictions about a ruined trade and starving population had been falsified by the event, and asserted the oft-forgotten maxim, that "nothing morally wrong can be politically right."

In 1841, he was made D.C.L. by his University: "It was my due long ago, so far as it is, worth anything, but I did not like to refuse it now. I was received with courtesy and nothing more; my popularity, such as it is lies, with 'the unwashed.'" Seven years before he had been received at Commemoration with a storm of hisses. Here is a case which shows why "the unwashed" loved him. A young woman in a Stockport mill was caught by a wheel, whirled round, and flung to the ground with broken limbs and mutilated body. Her employers deducted eighteen pence from her wages for the part of the week since the accident! Lord Ashley prosecuted the mill-owners, and at last they had to pay one hundred pounds compensation and six hundred pounds for the costs on both sides. The expense of a few shillings would have boxed off the machinery, and prevented the accident. This was one of many law-suits which he undertook for the sake of the factory hands.

Not till 1844 did the Government bring in their long-promised Bill, limiting "young persons'" work to twelve hours a day. Lord Ashley met it with the cry, "Ten hours, and no surrender." He was furiously attacked by Bright, who—"in a style," said the Delegates' report, "perhaps the most vindictive towards the working classes ever used in Parliament"—contradicted the statements about unhealthiness, and said Lord Ashley looked at Lancashire through a telescope, but when he scanned the

* Secretary of the Hand-in-Hand Insurance Office, unwearied in his labours for the cause.

suffering Dorsetshire labourers, he reversed the glass. Sir R. Peel urged that if labour in cotton mills was to be restricted, other trades, needlework and dressmaking especially, ought to be dealt with. "Is the House," he asked, "prepared to legislate for all these people?" And, when a tremendous cheer was followed by a shout of "yes," Sir Robert replied: "Then I don't see why we should not extend the restriction to agriculture," a remark which also called forth a ringing cheer. The Government Bill was twice defeated; but the wily Sir James Graham said: "Let us see how the House decides that the blank in Clause eight—the number of hours—shall be filled up." This was settled; the Government "twelve" was lost by three; and then, on the motion that the blank be filled with "ten," there was so much confusion, that five who had meant to support Lord Ashley, by mistake went against him, and his proposal, too, was lost by seven votes. After Easter the Bill came on again, and Peel threw it out by threatening to resign if it was passed. "The House did put itself," said Charles Greville, "in a strange predicament, with its two votes directly opposed to each other. But nothing could be worse than Graham's calling the Bill 'a Jack Cade legislation.'" A month after, Peel again threatened to resign, unless the House rescinded its vote on the Sugar Duties, a course which Disraeli, in one of his famous philippics, described as "dragging his supporters unreasonably through the mire."

When the Bill came on again in 1846, Lord Ashley felt it his duty to give up his seat, owing to the repeal of the Corn Laws, which he had been sent to Parliament to uphold; and Mr. Fielden, M.P. for Oldham, became the champion of the ten hours' clause, which—by what is called the irony of fate—was passed in 1850, while he, who from the first had been the soul of the movement, was out of Parliament. None the less was it his Bill; and a more salutary measure, forming as it did the basis of a whole code for the protection of labour, was never passed by any legislative assembly.

I have left out much, wishing to follow the Factory Bill right through. Thus, there was the Field Lane Ragged School, established in 1843 by the London City Mission, which he began to help soon after its foundation. Charles Dickens describes how, "when the school began, unprotected, unrecognised, the young fiends who swarmed in would badger the ill-trained

teachers with blasphemous questions, blow out the lights, throw the books in the gutter, and carry off the female scholars to their old wickedness." Lord Ashley's help went far to account for the change to quiet order, which the same writer found established two years later.

Then there was the Model Lodging House system, the good of which he had seen during those walks in very poor districts, which he began during his freedom from Parliamentary duties and kept up all the rest of his life. I have said nothing about the Chimney-sweepers' Bill, which, started in 1840, was pushed a step further in 1854, and yet another step ten years later, but was not carried in its completeness till 1876; the deaths of two boys—one only seven years old—suffocated in flues, being needed to force the House to take decisive action. It had taken more than a century to get rid of such a frightful system.

In 1760, Jonas Hanway, who introduced the umbrella, formed a committee to warn master sweeps that it was not Christian to buy or steal children of from four to eight years old, and rub them with brine before a hot fire to harden their flesh, lest too much of it should be scraped off by the rough insides of the flues. In his "Sentimental History of Chimney-sweepers"—sentimental was then used in a good sense—he pointed out that "'sooty cancer' is a disease which one has no right to inflict on one's fellow-creatures; and that to light a fire below in order to hasten a poor climbing boy's journey aloft, or to put out a chimney fire by sending a boy up it, are scarcely humane practices." "Bulgarian atrocities" are bad; but I am sure such misery never fell to the lot of any human beings in any part of Turkey as was the daily experience of our climbing boys. Yet a "curled and oiled Assyrian bull," Lord Beaumont, could tauntingly say in 1864: "The Bill is a pitiful cant of pseudo-philanthropy. The sole effect of the former measures has been that a few more houses have been burned, and a few more lives endangered than if it had never been passed."*

Then, coming between Lord Ashley's earliest efforts for the climbing boys, and his first Factory Bill, came the Colliery Bill, remarkable for having passed into law with comparatively brief delay. One of

* Charles Darwin was as bitter against the use of climbing boys as he was against slavery. His sister, at Shrewsbury, successfully prevented the efforts of "the brutal Shropshire Squires" to make the Act a dead letter.

my boyiah remembrances is the Strand full of harrowing pictures of what went on in coal-pits. Sandwich men were not invented then; and the huge placards were kept moving on trucks and low carts. When I saw them I was on my way to the City to one of the big schools; and I can now shut my eyes and see the "trappers," wee boys who had to sit alone twelve or fourteen hours in total darkness, pulling the adit door open when the "whirley" full of coal was coming near, and letting it shut the moment the machine had passed. Fancy such work for a nervous child of five—or sometimes four—years old. If he fell asleep, there was the "strap;" awake, he had the dread of bogey, and the certainty that beetles, rats, and such "small deer," were all around him. In some mines the rats would run off with the horses' food before the miners' eyes, and have been known to cause an explosion by carrying away a lighted candle.

The "hurriers," too, boys and girls, from thirteen to seventeen, naked to the waist, with nothing on but an old pair of trousers, crawling on hands and knees on a floor ankle deep in black sludge, a girdle round the middle, and a chain passing between the legs, hooked on to the "corve"—coal carriage. The adits were so narrow—often only from eighteen to twenty-four inches high—that their backs would be scored by rubbing against the roof; while always the air was so stifling, that the wonder is how children could grow up in it.

Almost worse was the lot of the "coal bearers," nearly all girls—sometimes only six years old—and women. They carried "creels," holding half-a-hundred weight; and the number of steps they went up fourteen times a day was sometimes as many as those up to the ball and cross of Saint Paul's. The "creels" were strapped round the forehead; and if a strap broke, woe betide those coming just behind. Then there were "putters," "tippers," etc.—almost all young children, badly and irregularly fed, and sometimes actually forced to work "double shifts," that is, thirty-six hours continuously. They were working, too, under the "truck system," forced, that is, to deal at the mine shop, at the manager's prices, and put up with the quality he chose to give.

Lord Ashley demanded the immediate exclusion of women and children from the pits. "We can't work at a profit except with child labour," replied the coal-masters. "Besides, unless they begin the work young their backs never get shaped to the cramped

positions in which the work has to be carried on."

"Even Egyptian civilisation never exhibited such a mass of sin and cruelty," said Lord Ashley in 1842; and yet Cobden opposed this Bill, as he did the Factory Act, and sneered in his way at "the philanthropists," just as Lord Melbourne did in his, when he said to the Queen during a dinner at Windsor, "there, Madam, is Ashley, the greatest Jacobin in your Majesty's dominions."

On the other hand, one of the most strenuous supporters of the Bill was Lord Palmerston, who, in the Lords, resisted the amendments that sadly weakened it. The Queen, too, was specially moved by the words of Isabel Hogg, an old Scotch collier woman: "Tell her that women-people don't mind work here, but they object to horse-work; and she'll have the blessings of all the Scots' coal-women, if she can get them out of the pits and send them to other labour."

The coal-owners struggled hard, resisting the "female clause," while giving way on that relating to children. More than once the House was counted out; and when it had passed the Commons, no Peer could be got to take charge of it in the Upper House. At last Lord Devon took it up, but "the question seemed to have no friends among the Peers; and several, like Lord Londonderry, were strongly against it. The Bishop of London and the Primate stayed away; only three Bishops—Chichester, Gloucester, and Norwich (this last, Stanley, father of the Dean) supported it. At last it was carried, in a season of as dire distress and trade depression—with bread riots and the like—as England has ever passed through. Next year Lord Londonderry got up a league to repeal the Colliery Act; but he failed. Lord Ashley beat the Cumming-Bruce amendment by one hundred and thirty-seven to twenty-three; and since then underground work has ceased for women and children.

This is enough for one life, and yet it is but a tithe of what this wonderful man accomplished. There were the City Arabs, and the Shoe-black Brigade, started in a moment at the 1851 Exhibition: "Why not make some of our boys into shoe-blacks for the foreigners?"

There was the Juvenile Mendicancy Bill, in 1853, for depriving debauched parents of control of their children—giving poor children that protection which Chancery gives to the rich. This brought him a challenge from Lord Mornington, who, when he was Long Pole Wallesey, had

had children taken from him by Lord Eldon's decree, and who thought the Mendicancy Bill was a reflection on him.

There were the Dean's Yard Flower Shows, in which Lord Shaftesbury—his title after his father's death—joined heartily with Dean Stanley, from whom he differed so widely in religious matters. There were the "Costers," his connection with whom would fill another paper. Everybody remembers the presentation of a donkey, and the bit of humour which closed the returning thanks :

"I hope the reporters will state that, the donkey having vacated the chair, his place was taken by Lord Shaftesbury."*

But enough. We have seen how Lord Shaftesbury came to be what he was ; and we have seen some little of what he did with his life. Oh, but he was a lord and rich ! On the contrary, he was exceedingly poor. In 1846 he wrote :

"More than half my income is borrowed at heavy interest. I have eight children, the two eldest costing me more than two hundred pounds a year each ; and an allowance from my father of only one hundred pounds a-year more than when I was a bachelor at Oxford."

So it was all his life. His work was out of all proportion to his means, for it depended not on money but on zeal and energy.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER X. AUTUMN MISTS.

CELIA'S sudden and triumphant conquest of Colonel Ward might really have seemed a little unnatural to anyone less infatuated than Paul. He had two very easy explanations of it : one supplied by love, the other by friendship. Celia was, of course, irresistible. And the Colonel was only too glad to be conquered, to be justified in a real, hearty admiration for Paul's future wife. His objections had only come from a mistaken sense of duty ; he was delighted to find what nonsense they were. He made no explanation of

his change of tactics—to Paul, the Canon, or anybody ; but from henceforth, from the day that he presented Celia with one of his favourite Clumbers, he was her devoted slave.

Paul himself, a young man without experience, could not reach the pitch of Colonel Ward's thoughtful worship. The Colonel suggested that a horse should be bought at once for Celia. Paul, of course, was only too happy, though this present of his carried her away from him for hours together, generally with two elderly cavaliers—the Colonel and the Canon. Then the Colonel threw himself, with all his good practical sense, into the matter of the restoration and reformation of the old house ; none of Mrs. Percival's views were too much for him ; his old affection for her, his new affection for Celia, carried him over mountains of ancient prejudice and difficulty. Paul began to find himself left behind in this race too. Then Celia thought the place was a little too shady, and one day Paul found the Colonel busy marking some of his finest trees. Then a faint shade of annoyance appeared on his pale face.

"What are you doing, Colonel !" he said gently. "Those trees are not coming down."

"I think you will find they are, my boy," said the Colonel. "Miss Darrell objects to a mass of shade just here, and she is quite right."

Paul said no more, and the Colonel went on with his marking.

September and October seemed to glide very swiftly away. It was a beautiful autumn, still and calm ; excellent weather for the workmen in and out of Red Towers, who had soon turned the peaceful old place into a desert of dust and scaffolding. Everybody was very happy ; not even Sabin and his wife had any doubts of their future, which seemed to them a great deal more assured than it really was. The Canon, having enjoyed as much shooting as he cared for and some pleasant rides, went back refreshed, after a month's holiday, to his parish at Woolsborough. In his mind, his fellow-guardian's unexpected good behaviour was all owing to that masterly letter of his, unanswered because unanswerable, but justified by results. Mrs. Percival and Celia stayed on for the present at Holm Lodge, where they had everything to occupy and amuse them. Paul, the happy lover, his marriage being fixed for January, moved himself and his

* Mr. W. J. Orsman, a Civil servant, anticipated in 1861 the Toynbee Hall folks by devoting his after-office hours to work among the Costermongers, etc. In 1868 Lord Shaftesbury became President of Mr. Orsman's Golden Lane Mission.

small goods across the road to Colonel Ward's cottage, where he spent his nights, living in a dream, he did not always quite know where.

And Celia was radiant. In that pure, high air of the pine-woods, she grew stronger and more beautiful every day. It had always been her wise way to extract all possible enjoyment out of life, even at its dullest, without making herself dependent on anybody or anything. She had never been bored, she had always been cheerful and contented; and now she was more than contented, she was very much pleased with herself and all her surroundings. She enjoyed making the Colonel talk nonsense, and follow her about till her aunt was almost jealous; she liked the deference of the old servants, especially Ford; the curious admiration that stared out of the village faces; the murmurs among the workmen as she walked about with Paul. She liked her rides, her journeys up to town, her unlimited power of indulging every fancy; the merest hint of a wish was enough, either to Paul or the Colonel, though Paul, very wrongly, was sometimes a little the stupider of the two.

In her better moments she liked Paul, and pitied him rather; sometimes she caught herself almost forgetting that, after all, he was the centre of this new life of hers, for here at Holm, as the weeks went on, he was not a very exacting lover. He was beginning, in truth, to have a certain fear of teasing Celia, of giving her too much of himself and his views. She always seemed to be surrounded with plans and patterns, or plunged in mysterious talks with her aunt, or making arrangements with the Colonel, and asking his advice. The days when she wanted defending against the Colonel had almost been pleasanter, though Paul would never have confessed it to himself. Now, in truth, she seemed to have done what she laughingly suggested that first day—taken away Paul's only friend: witness that little scene of marking the trees, Paul's own old trees, without even the form of consulting him. Something in Paul rebelled at that; a voice spoke to him, but he would not listen, because, after all, the Colonel was doing it for Celia. And generally, but not quite always, she herself took the trouble of driving away any little accidental shadow that crossed Paul's mind.

But the most beautiful time in a human life must have its drawbacks, and Paul would have laughed angrily at any one

who told him that these autumn weeks were not perfectly glorious. He did love Celia better than himself; he was not selfish, or jealous, or ungenerous. If sometimes he knew that his absence would please her better than his presence—why, it was only that Sunday at Woolsborough over again. He knew that he was rather a helpless fellow, ignorant about horses, curtains, and dados; and all these things must be arranged. Celia must please herself thoroughly about all these things; and some day, some happy day next year, when the confusion was over, and workpeople and shops were done with, and they were living together in their beautiful house, she would let him read poetry to her, or play to her on the organ which he meant to have in the library; and then they would come out together on the lawn, the moon shining through the cedars, and stand where he was standing now; and she would really belong to him then, and he would ask her if she was happy. Then a great owl floated slowly from one cedar to another, from darkness into moonlight, and into darkness again, and hooted his melancholy good-night to the young Squire.

At the end of October, in spite of sunshine, the short days were growing cold; and, to civilised beings like Mrs. Percival and Celia, the common and woods of Holm began to seem a little dull and wintry. So, as everything was in train at Red Towers, and was going forward to their satisfaction, they made their plans for going away.

Celia's marriage was to be a gay one, and the preparations for it wanted a great deal of time and thought, and could not be carried on at all at Holm Lodge. They were, therefore, going to London, and then down to Woolsborough for a few days, and then to Paris for their chief shopping, which, in Mrs. Percival's opinion, could be done nowhere else.

On their last day at Holm, they had promised to come to tea with Colonel Ward and Paul at the Cottage. It was a cold, bright, quiet afternoon, with a suggestion of frost in the air, and all the woods not evergreen were massed in many shades of brown, and red, and gold. Paul and the Colonel had been loitering about that afternoon in the ruins of Red Towers, and had come back in a hurry, covered with dust, to receive their visitors. The Colonel was inclined also to be cross with the workmen for idleness.

"Done by Christmas! Nonsense—no such thing!" he came back muttering.

Paul also was not in good spirits. It was all right, of course, that the house should be pulled to pieces, but he could not, like other people, enjoy the process while it went on. After an hour or two spent in those dismantled rooms, he generally felt an intenser longing than usual for the presence of Celia, for whose sake alone his quiet old house was given up to the restorers.

It was a dreadful thought that she was going away to-morrow; these works without her would lose their meaning, and become nothing but a devastation. He started off that afternoon to meet her and Mrs. Percival, with a kind of weight at his heart, which appeared to him to be simply the want of Celia.

The road along the common, going from Red Towers towards Holm, and passing Holm Lodge, close to the lower gate of the common, dips suddenly below Colonel Ward's cottage, and is bordered by rugged sandy banks, with narrow footpaths, worn by sheep and children. Then the road rises again; but still the level of the common is higher, though to the right of the road it shelves slightly down from this inhabited side of it towards the great fir-wood, which covers all the hill-side and runs down into the farther valley. The common—its green spaces eaten close by the cows and sheeps that graze there, and covered thickly, for the rest of it, with furze and bracken, and low-tangled briars, and cushions of heather now dead and dry—is a network of small paths, or tracks merely, leading this way and that, from one broader way to another, in and out of the wood. As to the wood itself, younger trees stand here and there, pushing their way out into the common, veiling the entrances, many and winding, to the inner depths of what is worthy to be called a forest.

Paul, leaving the Colonel's cottage, did not keep the level of the road, but mounted the bank, and made his way with long light steps on the rugged edge of it. So it happened that, looking over the common to his right, he saw something white running among the brown bracken, and wondered if one of the Colonel's dogs—Punch probably—had taken to bad ways and gone out without leave.

But then he saw a slight grey figure, with a grey hat, appear suddenly from behind two or three young fir trees, and hurry on towards the darkest, loneliest, steepest part of the wood. It was Celia: he knew that soft grey dress well. She

was carrying something white in her hand, something that looked like an open letter, and it was her faithful servant Jack, of course, who was running before her in the undergrowth.

Paul stood still. She did not turn her head or see him; she went on, in and out among the dark fir-stems, until the common disappeared in the wood, and she, as Paul still looked after her, disappeared too. His first impulse had been of course to overtake her; as a rule, she never went into the woods alone; those woods, as everyone knows, are too near London to have a very good name, though Colonel Ward for several years did all he could to discourage tramps and bad characters. But as some instinct had said to Paul once before, that Saturday evening, when he thought of taking a canoe and going to meet Celia and her cousin—"She would rather I did not," so it said now—"She does not want me," and Paul, with a puzzled mind, hurried on to the lodge to meet Mrs. Percival.

He found her sitting by the fire in her pretty little drawing-room, absorbed in some letters which had come by the second post, and particularly in a long one from Vincent. She seemed quite comfortable, and not inclined to move.

"But we thought you were coming to tea with us," said Paul. "And Celia—I saw her in the distance just now, going into the wood. It was Celia—I couldn't be mistaken!"

"Oh, I dare say," said Mrs. Percival, "Why didn't you run after her, or call her back? She went out for a walk some time ago, before the post came. I wish she would come back, for these are things that want answering. Yes, of course we were coming to tea with you and the Colonel. I didn't know it was so late. Why did you let Celia escape, dear boy? She may have forgotten all about it."

"She wouldn't forget," said Paul. Then he added, in excuse for himself: "She looked rather as if she wanted to escape, so I thought I would not follow her."

"Oh, nonsense. She has been very cold all day. She was running about with the dog to warm herself."

Then Mrs. Percival threw aside her letters, came to Paul, where he was standing disconsolate by the window, and laid her hand kindly on his shoulder.

"I know who is too sensitive for his own happiness," she said. "You are doing all you can, dear, to make Celia a most

happy and fortunate girl, and you are succeeding brilliantly. But Paul, you would be happier yourself if you took things as she does, without too much thoughtfulness. You must not lay all your own rights and wishes entirely at her feet, and worship her like an idol, and blot yourself out of existence altogether. It is a little morbid to be always studying her, and fancying, 'what will she think?' It is not good for you or for her. Paul, you should learn to trust Celia in the same way that she trusts you. Does she ever think that you want to escape from her, for instance?"

A smile came into Paul's dark face, which had been sad enough just before.

"That is absurd and impossible," he said. "She couldn't think that."

"Then go," said Mrs. Percival, patting his shoulder. "You saw which way she went; go and bring her back to the cottage. Don't wait to walk with me. I will take care of the Colonel, and keep some tea for you two silly children, if you are at all long. But don't be long; it is cold in the woods."

"What a child he is!" Mrs. Percival moralised rather sadly, as Paul rushed past the window on his way to the woods. "Many boys of seventeen are older. I hope Celia will make him happy. I hope she appreciates him. I wish he was not a little too nice for her. They will not always have me to keep things straight."

The air was very clear and full of yellow light, and the shadows were growing long, as Paul crossed the common and went into the wood, now a great temple with golden pillars, and a dark roof through which a thousand stars were shining.

It was not till he was really in the wood that he thought how difficult it would be to find Celia. She might have taken any one of twenty ways: the soft, deep paths with their carpet of pine-needles, crossed each other constantly, leading away in all directions. Here and there was a clearing, where trees had been cut down; beyond these there were cart-tracks.

Most of the wood was carpeted with oak scrub and whortle bushes, growing close to the ground among the tall pine-stems, and making it difficult to see through any extent of the long colonnade of trees.

Paul whistled loudly as he followed one of the paths, thinking that Jack might hear and understand, if Celia did not; but his whistle brought no reply; and, perhaps for half-an-hour he searched about in vain. Then it struck him to take the

shortest way across the wood, down into the valley on the north side, where there were a few cottages. It was the prettiest bit of the wood. He had taken Celia there one day and told her it was like Switzerland; the trees were very large and tall, growing up on wild sandy banks about the path, which went winding down almost precipitously.

Far below lay the little valley, with a stream dancing in the hollow, and blue wood-smoke stealing up from half-hidden chimneys. Two or three goats and small, active cows found a living on these slopes and ledges; one of them carried a tinkling bell. This, and the smell of the pines, and the musical trickle of water, gave a real Alpine feeling to that corner of Paul's wood; one expected to meet a dark-faced boy with a long stick, and a rose in his hat, singing as he came to drive the cattle home.

Following the path that led to this, Paul presently came in sight of Celia, sitting above the path at the foot of one of the largest trees, with the glory of the evening light shining full upon her.

She was sitting perfectly still, gazing down into the valley, and she held an open letter in her hand.

It seemed to Paul that she looked strangely pale and sad; but when he reached her, on the contrary, she was flushed, and began to laugh. The paths were so soft that she only heard him coming when he was actually climbing up to her perch above the pathway; the lifting of Jack's long ears, and wagging of his tail had passed quite unnoticed by her. But Paul, coming to her side, saw no letter, and thought for a moment that his eyes must have deceived him. Then he very naturally forgot this trifling circumstance.

Celia laughed, but she did not look pleased or happy.

"What is it, Paul? What do you want?" she said, and her manner was certainly cold; his instinct had not quite deceived him after all.

"I want you to come to tea at the Cottage," he said. "I have been looking for you for the last half-hour. You had not forgotten, had you?"

"Oh, bother," said Celia.

What would have been supremely ugly from any other lips was almost pretty from hers.

"Don't you want to come?" he said. He had thrown himself down beside her on a cushion of ling, and was looking up

with eyes not unlike Jack's in their wistfulness.

"Don't look at me like that," she said, "as if I was going to beat you;" and she laughed again, and turned her head towards the valley.

Paul was silent: his eyes fell, and studied the ground till she spoke again.

"The Colonel is a darling, of course, but one might have a little too much of him. I suppose he won't manage all our affairs always, will he, and want us to go tea in that stuffy little house every other day?"

Paul did not know what to say. He could hardly believe that it was Celia speaking, complaining of the Colonel's devotion to her interests, now that she had secured it. If anyone had a right to complain a little, perhaps it was Paul; and he did not even admit such a thought into his mind. But Celia, with all her sweetness—what could be the meaning of it?

"Has anything happened to vex you, dear?" said Paul. He did not feel it necessary to reassure her about the Colonel.

"I am only in a bad temper," she answered quickly. "Go back to Colonel Ward, and tell him you couldn't find me."

"Not so very untrue, either," Paul reflected, for this was not the Celia he knew. He had often thought about the magic of the woods; all sorts of strange demons might live among those dark tall trees. Some of this enchantment might have seized on Celia.

"Mrs. Percival is there by this time," he said.

"All right; then he won't want me."

"And am I to go? I don't like leaving you here alone. It will soon be dark, and it's getting uncommonly cold. Don't you think so?"

"No; I am very hot," said Celia. "I will come presently. You can wait for me or not, as you please."

Paul made no answer, but waited patiently. It was cold; the sun was not far from setting, and a chill air came breathing through the wood. No one who was not in love would have dreamed of sitting out under trees on such an autumn evening.

"Dear—have I done anything to make you unhappy?" Paul said presently.

"No, and you never could," said Celia—a remark which might have two meanings, but Paul took the best. "Only I wish you

could not always be fancying things about me. It teases me, do you know. I am dreadfully independent, and I like to be left alone. Somebody—who knew me rather well—once said I was as cold as a fish, and as hard as a stone."

"What lies!"

"I don't know. There was truth in it, I believe. So much the worse for any poor dear things who are geese enough to care for me—so much the worse for you."

He did not speak, but quietly took her hand and drew it down to his lips—the right hand, which before he came had been holding a letter. After a moment she took it away from him.

"I am not worth it, Paul," she said; and there was some sweetness in her voice again now. "I told you before, I am not fit to be spoilt. I don't even enjoy it as I ought. I wish you would forget me sometimes, and think of something else."

"That's too much to ask. I would do anything for you but that," said Paul, "especially when you are going away to-morrow."

Celia gave a little impatient sigh.

"I suppose you will be coming too?"

"I don't know. I should like to go to Paris when you are there, if you don't mind."

"Oh yes, you must go with us to Paris. Perhaps you will come across that French friend of yours again; your friend with the grand name."

"I wish I could," said Paul. "Look here, some day—next year, if you like—couldn't we have a tour in that west part of France where his old place is? He told me a lot about that country, and I think it must be very jolly. He said that he is generally down there early in the autumn; we might go and call upon him."

"Yes; I dare say it would be rather amusing," said Celia.

She could not send Paul away; and so with an effort at her usual good sense, she resigned herself, and glided out of her bad temper into a better one. When she at last walked back with him to the Cottage, she was almost herself again; only a slightly nervous flush, a shadow across her eyes, and a little absentness of manner could have suggested any trouble.

Mrs. Percival did not even know that she had met the postman; and no one could guess that in her pocket she carried a passionate love-letter from her cousin Vincent.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER X. FANNING THE FLAME.

NEXT morning his father received another brief and vague letter from Fred, to say that business detained him still in London, but that he hoped to be home in a few days. The letter contained also an apology to Gower, not only for Fred's absence, but for his silence; he would have written to excuse and explain his seeming rudeness to his friend, if he had not been pressed greatly for time.

This letter troubled the Vicar exceedingly, but he had the politeness to conceal an anxiety and an annoyance which might have made his guest uncomfortable.

"I hardly know how to apologise to you, Mr. Gower, for having got you here upon false pretences," he said genially, "but I hope you will contrive to put up with us till Fred comes."

"If you can put up with me. Afraid I'm rather a nuisance," Gower murmured with a seemingly unaccountable shyness. In fact, the too susceptible youth was already well into the first phase of love.

"We have not the bad taste to think so, I assure you," rejoined the Vicar cordially. "But how are you to get through the time?"

"There's Beechwood; Mr. Spratt would be delighted to get an excuse for going there," May suggested mischievously.

"Yes, Beechwood would fill a day admirably," said her father.

"Do you mean that—that beetle place?" Gower asked, in some alarm, of May.

"You're afraid to have a pin stuck through you," she answered, laughing.

"To have what?" asked Mrs. Beresford, doubtful of having heard aright.

"You've already found out Spratt's beetle craze," said the Vicar, smiling. "He has got together a gruesome collection of them, which you will have to inspect some time."

This somehow recalled to Kathleen her father's allusion to Gower, a few days since, as Fred's "white elephant."

"Where's oor white elephan'?" she asked, looking up at Gower with eyes wide, blue and serene, as a summer sky.

"My what?"

"White elephan'. Papa said oo'd a white elephan'."

"Papa said Fred had an elephant, pussy," May hastened, with some presence of mind, and with literal truth, to say.

"Papa said Fred had a boocow," asserted Kathleen, contentiously.

"But Fred hasn't come home, pet. When I go to Leeds, I shall bring you back a Noah's Ark, with an elephant, and a cow, and a fly, and everything in it," May promised.

"Did you ever remark," observed the Vicar to Gower as a diversion, "how thoroughly Darwinian a Noah's Ark is? There's a scientific indefiniteness in the forms of the animals, as if, in those early days of evolution, they had not yet quite made up their minds themselves what to be." This remark would not have been more unintelligible to Gower if made in Hebrew; but our good Vicar had something of the schoolmaster still in his style of talk.

"There's no mistake about the fly, for its trunk is a little smaller and its eyes are a good deal larger than the elephant's," said May.

"Oo said a white elephan', my elephan'."

b'own," cried Kathleen, returning with a fly's fretful persistence to the sore spot.

"I must have meant a nuisance, like yourself, pet," said the Vicar, stroking her flaxen hair and then drawing back her head till she looked up at him.

"An' oo said," cried Kathleen, releasing her head and turning upon May, "an' oo said that he was a 'nuisance,' nodding towards Gower.

"I hope you don't mind being called 'amusing,'" Mabel said desperately, for Kathleen's attempt at the pronunciation of "nuisance," would sound like "amusing" to one who did not understand her manner of speech. "It isn't quite so bad as being 'funny,' you know."

Gower, reassured by her readiness, in spite of her scarlet face, answered: "I think it very complimentary."

However, Kathleen's unhappy speech had the effect of making May effusively amiable to Gower. She exerted herself so on this and the succeeding days to prevent his considering himself a nuisance to his hosts, that he began to believe he was making immense way with her. To make way with her became more and more the absorbing object of all his thoughts and hopes, for every day fed his growing passion. He was of that chameleon description of mind, which takes its colour from its neighbourhood and is swayed extravagantly in its estimate of persons by the esteem in which others hold them. Even in choosing a wife he would be influenced as much by what others would think of her, as by what he thought of her himself. Now it happened that in Hammersley May was immensely popular, and wherever the Vicar took Gower, her name was sure to come up for praise.

"By the way," suggested the Vicar to Gower, "you ought to see a factory."

"Oh, I forgot to tell you, father, that Mr. Sugden will give us the field."

Mr. Sugden was the manufacturer whose mill the Vicar proposed to visit, and the field had been begged from him by May for the extension of the narrow school playground.

"It's very generous of him, and I will call in the office to-day to thank him. Will you come, Mr. Gower? The mill is really well worth seeing, and you ought to do it. Places of worship are always the things to do, you know, everywhere," he added with a rather far-fetched satirical meaning, which was lost on his guest.

"Will you come, Mrs. Beresford?"

asked Gower, meaning, of course, mother and daughter.

"It always gives me a headache, but if May would like to go——" began Mrs. Beresford, distracted between duty and disgust, for she loathed the nauseating smell of a factory.

"But I shouldn't at all, mamma, thank you. It's just like going in unprepared for an examination, if you know what that means, Mr. Gower."

"Rather!"

"Well, it's just like that, for a girl to go shabbily dressed through a mill; she's pulled to pieces—what you call 'plucked'—by weavers, who know the cost to a farthing of everything she has on."

"I had better put on my Sunday clothes," Gower said, smiling.

"They know and care nothing about a gentleman's clothes, and they will only stare at you as if you had stepped out of Madame Tussaud's—that is, without the least idea of being rude, or of your minding it."

"I think I had better not venture, sir," Gower said, turning to the Vicar.

"Oh, nonsense, they're too busy to stare at anyone."

"If Miss Beresford would come to divide their attention."

"It would be too distracting; but I can lend you a veil."

"Your class are always so glad to see you, May," suggested her mother.

"My dear mamma, it's like looking for a needle in a bundle of straw, to try to find one of them at Sugden's."

"All I can say is, my dear, that I'm very glad you're not coming, because you stop to talk to every other girl on each floor. You kept me there over two hours the last time I took you," said her father.

"Then I must have had a new frock on, father."

"It couldn't have been so long ago," replied her father, in a tone which suggested to May's sensitive ear his remembrance and resentment of Fred's appropriation of her allowance.

Wherefore she turned the conversation to the playground extension scheme, of which she herself had been the projector.

At the factory Gower found that what the Vicar had suggested as to May's popularity was more than true.

"I am going to show you something better worth seeing than the mill, and that is its master," said the Vicar, as they walked together through the village. "He is a thorough Yorkshireman—honest, open,

genial as the sun—but with small respect for anyone but himself, or anything but 'brass'—money, that is. You should hear him on those two subjects, and you shall, I promise you. The English people despise and detest brag; but they are a truthful people, and they will tell you the bare, honest truth about themselves; and if it would sound the most outrageous brag in any other mouth, that is not their fault—"

At this point the Vicar recollected himself, and Gower, who was the last person to discuss national characteristics with. But, when he pulled up suddenly, Gower placidly assented by murmuring something about "brag being un-English, and bad form besides."

The Vicar eyed him curiously with a humorous gleam. "You'll find Mr. Sugden thoroughly English," he said, and then changed the conversation to Cambridge—its works and ways.

But Gower did not find Mr. Sugden thoroughly English in the Vicar's satirical sense. Generally speaking, Mr. Sugden was a man of what might almost be called a suffocating presence. The room his vast bodily bulk took up was nothing to the mental space his egotism seized upon. He so filled a room with himself that you felt the breath you breathed belonged to him, and was yours only on sufferance. This morning, however, only his towering manner was oppressive, for he had little time to give the Vicar, and that little was taken up with talk, not of himself, but of May.

"Where's Miss May?" he asked at once, after Gower's introduction to him.

"She didn't come because we were going through the mill. She said she was too shabbily dressed to run the gauntlet of your weavers."

"Nay, that's all nowt; folk ne'er notice how she's donned, they can nobbut look i' her bonny face."

The Vicar was greatly pleased, as he well might be, with such a compliment from Mr. Sugden, who spoke always well within the truth, when anyone but himself was his subject.

"I will tell her you said so."

"Nay, shoo knows it hersen better nor me," rejoined Mr. Sugden, laughing, for he could not resist taking discount even off a compliment which was accepted too readily.

"Well, I'll tell her that, too," retorted the Vicar.

"Nay, mun; but aw'll tell thee what to tell her. Tell her to send thee i' future on thee own errands, for aw can ne'er deny her owt, aw can't. Shoo's wheedled me aht o' yon field wi' her face an' her tongue, an' it's nigh hand a hunerd pahnd aht o' my pocket."

"In that case, I shall be sure not to send her again," replied the Vicar, laughing; whereupon Mr. Sugden thought it necessary to say reassuringly with a wooden seriousness:

"Nay, nay; aw'm nobbut joking. Yo' mun send her as oft as yo've a mind; it fair does me gooid to see her; it does that." Then, turning to Gower, he said with no accent: "So you want to see my little shop?" On Gower's murmuring a modest assent, he added: "So you shall; but I'm sorry that I cannot show you over it myself, as I have to catch the 11.30 for Leeds."

He sent, then, for an overlooker named Dalby, who, as ill luck would have it, was an enthusiast about the mill. He felt, and expected you to feel, in looking at beautiful machinery, the delight of a fervent anatomist in demonstrating the exquisite adaptation of means to ends in a human body.

To Gower, however, the exquisitely designed, finished, and adapted machinery meant only noise, noisome smells, and an atmosphere so thick in its foulness that you seemed rather to eat than to breathe it. The girls, too, who stared at him as coolly as a herd of cows that lift their drowsy heads from the pasture to look with a dull, ruminant curiosity at one taking a short cut through a field, were none of them prepossessing in their hideous dress, saturated and unsavoury with oil. Besides, he had to affect an intelligent interest in every wheel, spindle, shuttle, warp, and woof, and in their minutest intricacies and inter-relations, though the explanations thereof might as well have been made to him in Hebrew, as in Ephraim Dalby's broad Yorkshire.

Vainly did the Vicar, at sight of Gower's woe-begone dejection, make attempts to deliver him; but Dalby, being unable to conceive a lack of interest in machinery, imagined that Mr. Beresford was considering only their guide's loss of time.

"T'lad mun see t'whole job, for he's noan like to see owt o' t'soart agin." And when at last "t'whole job" was done, Dalby, as he shook his victim hastily by the hand, said in the perfect assurance of

having given him the greatest treat of his life:

"Yo' mun gie us a look in, whene'er yo've an odd ahr."

But to the Vicar he said, "Yo' mun tell Miss May to gie us a look in sooin, for my missus is fair sick to see her, an' ahr Eliza Ann wishes she was dahn again, to have her coom ivery day."

"What was that he said?" asked Gower as they walked from the factory.

"He said you might spend all your spare time in the mill," answered the Vicar, laughing.

"But about Miss Beresford?"

"He said his daughter wished to be ill again, only to have May come and see her daily—really a fine compliment, when you remember that Eliza Ann would never have thought of it, if she hadn't meant it. A West Riding compliment is like the gold of Ophir for its rarity and its purity; it's always twenty-four carat."

When the Vicar took the schools on their way for a casual inspection, May's name again came up for praise. As they entered the school-room, the children rose like one child, with a suggestion of perfect discipline, which everything else in the school confirmed, for its management was admirable. The schoolmistress, a tall, pale, extremely lady-like woman, dressed in black, received the Vicar with an evidently unforced and unofficial smile, which was reflected in the face of almost every child in the room. When the Vicar had introduced Gower, he said:

"So we've got the field, Miss Brice."

"Yes, sir; thanks to Miss May. It was altogether the idea of her own class to get her to ask for it."

"Instead of me!" cried the Vicar, with affected offence.

"They probably thought," replied Miss Brice, smiling in response to the Vicar's genial smile, "they probably thought that you might be refused, while it was impossible to refuse her. Once they had persuaded her to ask for it, they made so sure of it that they arranged for a grand opening."

"By her, of course. I seem to be as completely dethroned as King Lear."

"I think you're to be invited to be present, sir," replied Miss Brice, laughing.

Then the children were set to sing for Gower's delectation, and, in the middle of this excellent performance, May entered.

When the singing ceased, and May had greeted Miss Brice, she turned to Gower.

"You must take a class, Mr. Gower," she said to him, "and find how it feels to be an examiner."

"I don't—I can't," he stammered.

"You read, I'm sure," she said in the precise tone of a hostess pressing a bashful girl to sing.

"Yes," he answered, laughing, immensely pleased and encouraged by her "badinage," "I can read."

"I thought so," she rejoined triumphantly; and she forthwith made Miss Brice give over to him the Second Standard Class then in hand. It was ludicrous, even to the hapless youth himself, to find himself face to face with a row of little wide-eyed girls, and listening in a general silence that might be felt, to "But—the pig—has—not—hands—to—wash—its—face—as—you—have—Ann, etc.," read in the staccato, communistic manner of children, who give the least significant word in a sentence equal prominence with the most important.

Suddenly there was a dead pause, and Gower, looking up to discover its cause, was confounded to find the right hand of nearly every girl in the class levelled at him.

"What is it?" he asked nervously, to be answered instantly by a chorus of "Stupid!"

Here the Vicar intervened to explain that [this shout of seeming abuse meant merely that the other children could read the word which the child in hand had stuck at.

"They read very well for their age," Gower said, resigning the book with a sigh of relief to Miss Brice, then turning to May, he whispered confidentially, "I thought that even they had found me out."

Now May had already repented of the flippant practical joke she had played upon him, and her repentance was much deepened by the good-humoured way in which he took it. This feeling greatly strengthened her resolve to make herself as agreeable as possible to their guest, in order to erase whatever impression Kathleen's babble might have left on his mind.

Thus it happened that Gower was led to imagine that he had made upon May something of the impression which she made daily deeper upon him. If her light, bright, pleasant manner, and her "badinage" were not consummate coquetry, they were, he assured himself, conscious and undoubted encouragement; and such encouragement was all that was needed to set his passion ablaze.

That she was giving the youth such encouragement was suggested to her by Con, of all people.

Con, making the most of such opportunities as he had of seeing them together, had no doubt at all of Gower's intentions, and had some misgiving as to the countenance May might be inclined to give them. Of course this young "squireen" had fallen in love with his adored Miss May; but had Miss May come to care for him? Deep were Con's searchings of heart upon this matter. He would sound her upon the first opportunity. When next she came alone into the garden Con made his sinuous approaches to this subject.

"Well, Con, how are you this morning?"

"Ah, begorra, miss, I'm kilt intirely wid the rheumatiz all up me back."

"It's the bad days we have had."

"It isn't days, miss, but years—that's where it is. I'm an ould man, Miss May; an' an ould man's like an ould barn—all holes for the rain an' the rata."

"Nonsense, Con; you're not an old man yet."

"I wish ye could insinse that into the rheumatiz, miss, an' the browntitus, an' it's little trouble they'd be afther givin' me thin. Thim sowrt o' things always comes wid ould age, as if it wasn't trouble enough wid itself. A shtarved cat is all fleas; it is so. A shtarved cat is all fleas," he repeated slowly, straightening himself the while—not without pain—his left hand being pressed into the small of his back.

"That stooping must be bad for you," May said, with the deep sympathy she felt for the old man expressed strongly in her face and in her voice.

"Not it, miss," he replied with sudden cheeriness. "It's the shtoopin', an' shtraitenin' that keeps me supple, like a bow. An' whin's Masther Fred comin'?"

"We don't quite know yet. He's still detained in London," she answered with a cloud on her face, which Con misinterpreted.

"He'll be shtayin' at home a bit longer this time?"

"Yes; he is sure to stay all his time at home, I think."

"Ay, miss; he's got yon young gintleman wid him. He'll be shtayin' all the time too, maybe?"

"I don't know; as long as he likes"

"That'll be long enough, I'm thinkin'," he replied drily. "An' it's not outshtayin' his welcome he'll be, thin," he added, with some sarcasm in his tone.

"He's no great favourite of yours, Con, I'm afraid."

"Sure I don't know him at all, miss. Sorra a much ye'd know of a man in a week if ye seen him ivery day, an' all day long, let alone seein' him a time or two wid a cigar in his mouth, an' not a civil word out of it."

"I think he's afraid of you, Con," May suggested, smiling at the remembrance of the last colloquy between Con and Gower.

"Afeared! Moiryah! He took no more notice o' me nor o' the burrd on the bough. Maybe it's in love he is, miss?" he said, with a glance of shrewd observation at her face.

"He's not confided it to me, Con," May answered, laughing with such obviously unaffected unconsciousness that Con's mind was at once set at ease about this matter.

"It's you that'll be the first to hear of it, miss, I'm thinkin'."

"I?"

Con nodded emphatically.

"Little as I seen of him, I seen that plain enough; an' he'll be afther thinkin' you seen it, too, Miss May. He's like wan o' thim spaniels that, if ye wan't throw a shtick for him to fetch, 'ill never afther lave ye alone till ye bate him wid it."

It took May some seconds to digest this parable of the difficulty of disembarassing herself of a conceited suitor, to whom she had once given encouragement.

"You're mistaken altogether, Con."

"Maybe so, miss," he rejoined drily.

"But you are, really."

"Well, miss, if it's only me that's mistaken, there's no harrm done," he said significantly.

This caution May, of course, took in good part from the old man who loved her from childhood as his child, and of whose sagacity she had, not without reason, a very high opinion. Nevertheless, she considered that, in this case, Con's prejudice against Gower had jaundiced his judgement.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

MARCH.

ROMULUS gave this name to the month when he divided the year, in honour of his supposed father, Mars. He also made it the first month of the year. It was under the protection of the goddess Minerva, and has always contained thirty-one days. On the first day of the month the Romans

celebrated the Feast of the Sali, and, during its course, they also sacrificed to Anna Perenna, they began their Comitia, and the Vestals renewed the sacred fire. The Saxons gave to it the name of Lenet Monath, "because," according to Verstegan, "the days did then begin in length to exceed the night. And, being so called, when they received Christianity, and consequently the custom of fasting, they called this season the Fast of Lenet; hereof it cometh that we now call it Lent."

It had other two names also — Rhed Monath, from one of the deities to whom sacrifices were made in March; and Illyd Monath, or Stormy Month. The ancients always regarded it as an unlucky month for marriages, though it only contained six unlucky days, or "dies mala." According to one ancient calendar, the first, sixth, and eighth, and according to another the fifteenth, sixteenth, and twenty-eighth, were the days on which nothing should be attempted.

March, we know, either "comes in as a lion and goes out like a lamb," or "comes in as a lamb and goes out like a lion." A very common weather saying is that:

So many mists in March you see,
So many frosts in May will be.

It is also said that "a March dust is worth a King's ransom;" but contrariwise we are told that "a dry March never begs its bread." In a nursery rhyme of ancient date we are taught that

March winds and April showers
Help to bring on May flowers.

The precious stone peculiar to the month is the jasper, which ensures long life, health, and general prosperity. But

Who on this world of ours their eyes
In March first open, shall be wise—
In days of peril firm and brave,
And wear a bloodstone to their grave.

The bloodstone indicates firmness in affection, and is said to be a "knowing" stone.

This year, March contains quite a cluster of feast days and holidays, beginning on the first and ending on the thirtieth. The first day of note is Saint David's Day (March the first).

Amongst Welshmen this day was, for almost centuries, observed as a feast day, and, at the present time, the ever-recurring anniversary is observed by the wearing of imitation leeks and the eating of late dinners. Saint David is supposed to have been the son of Xanthus ap Ceredig, Lord of Ceredigion (Cardigan) and Non, daughter

of Gynir of Caergawh, Pembrokeshire. David, disdaining the royal estate to which he was born, aspired to the crozier and the mitre, and in due time these fell to his share. He became Primate of Wales in 519, and died at St. David's, then known as Menevia, in 544, at a very advanced age. He was interred in the Church of Saint Andrew; but in 962 his remains were removed to Glastonbury. A monument to his memory is to be seen in the Cathedral of Saint David's. Southey wrote an inscription for a monument to him in the Vale of Ewais:

Here was it, stranger, that the Patron Saint
Of Cambria passed his age of penitence,
A solitary man; and here he made
His hermitage, the roots his food, his drink
Of Hodney's mountain stream. Perchance thy youth
Has read with eager wonder, how the Knight
Of Wales, in Ormandine's enchanted bower,
Slept the long sleep: and if there in thy veins
Flow the pure blood of Britain, sure the blood
Hath flowed with quicker impulse at the tale
Of David's deeds, when thro' the press of war
His gallant comrades followed his green crest
To conquest. Stranger! Hatterill's mountain
heights,
And this fair Vale of Ewais, and the stream
Of Hodney, to thine afterthoughts will rise
More grateful, thus associate with the name
Of David, and the deeds of other days.

The most extraordinary virtues have been ascribed to the Saint, who has been adopted as the patron of his country; but there is only one that, from its very wildness, merits reproduction. It is extracted from a very old work, entitled "A Correct Historie of the Seven Champions" (1694).

"Saint David behaved himself so bravely at the Court of the Count Palantine, that he made him his companion, and, on a festival, there being tilts and tournaments, and St. David being a champion, he entered first; and the Count's son, being ambitious of honour, went to answer him, and at the first was like to have worsted St. David, but the next encounter the latter felled both the man and horse to the ground and killed them. This so enraged the Count that he contrived to destroy him, but could not effect it, whereupon he sent him to bring an enchanter's head, called Ormonden, and St. David went to a rock, where he found a sword fast, which he strove to move, but not being able, he fell down and slept for seven years, until St. George, wandering near the enchanted garden, and seeing St. David asleep, and a sword in the rock, he gave it a pull, when out it came, and immediately the enchantment was broke and he awaked."

How the leek became first associated with Saint David's Day cannot possibly be

declared with any degree of certainty ; but in the Harleian MS., 1977, fol. 9, the following lines occur :

I like the leeke above all herbes and flowers.
When first we wore the same the day was ours.
The leeks is white and greens, whereby is meant
That Britaines are both stout and eminent.
Next to the Lion and the Unicorn
The Leeke the fairest emblын that is worn.

Amongst the traditions I found current in Wales as to its origin was one to the effect that once during a fierce conflict with the Saxons Saint David ordered his own countrymen to place leeks in their hats, in order to distinguish them from their enemies. The base Sassenach says that "The Welsh in olden days were so infested by Ourang-outangs that they could obtain no peace, day or night, and not being themselves able to extirpate them, they invited the English to assist, who came ; but, through mistake, killed several of the Welsh, so that in order to distinguish the men from the monkeys, the English desired the men to stick a leek in their hats." Howell, the Welsh antiquarian, not myself, is responsible for this libel on his countrymen.

The "Flying Post" (1699) contained the following paragraph : "Yesterday, being St. David's Day, the King according to custom wore a leek in honour of the ancient Britons, the same being presented to him by the serjeant porter, whose place it is, and for which he claims the clothes his Majesty wore that day ; the courtiers in imitation of his Majesty wore leeks also."

Owen, in his "Cambrian Biography" says, "The wearing of the leek on St. David's Day probably originated from the custom of 'Cymartha,' or the neighbourly, aid practised among farmers, which is of various kinds. In some districts of South Wales all the neighbours of a small farmer without means appoint a day when they attend to plough his land or assist in other offices, and, at such a time, it is a custom for each individual to bring his portion of leeks, to be used in making a pottage for the company."

Mr. Llewellyn, however, says it was first worn under these circumstances : "As a Prince of Wales was returning victorious from battle he wished to have some flower or leaf to commemorate the event, but it being winter, no plant or shrub was seen until they came to the Wye, when they beheld the Sive, which he commanded to be worn as a memorial of the victory."

Saint Caadda, or Chad, whose feast is

March the second, is credited with having been the first Christian Missionary to the East Saxons. Educated at the monastery of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, he founded the See of Lichfield, of which he was the first Bishop. At an advanced age he retired from the Episcopate, and settled with a company of monks, seven or eight in number, near at hand. He died about 673, at Stors, and in 700, when he was canonised, his bones were removed to Lichfield. Of course all the old stories of miracles and the like are told of the Saint, but, like a celebrated almanack, it came to be said of them—"mostly lies, a little true." During the Parliamentary wars a strange miracle is reported of this Saint. On the second of March, 1643, the Royalists, who had, under the Earl of Chesterfield, fortified the Cathedral Close, were attacked by the Parliamentary forces under Lord Brooke. It is said that the latter, as he approached the city, prayed that he might, if his cause were not just, be presently cut off. Hardly had he entered the town when he was shot down by a deaf and dumb gentleman, named Dyott, who was stationed on the middle tower of the church. This at the time was regarded as a special interposition of Providence, at the instigation of good St. Chad.

Mid Lent or Mothering Sunday is the name applied to the Fourth Sunday in Lent (March eleventh), from the fact that in the early days of Christianity it was considered incumbent on children to visit their parents and their mother church, taking with them some small offering. It is probable that this custom arose out of the Pagan Festival of Hilaria, celebrated by the Romans in honour of the Mother of the Gods, on the Ides of March.

During Lent, a great quantity of bread, called "avver," or "haver," consisting of oats, leavened and kneaded into large, thin, round cakes, which is placed over the fire on a griddle, is made and consumed in Westmoreland, on Mothering Sunday. At Seville, on this day, there is a strange usage, evidently the relic of an ancient custom : "Children dressed very much after the fashion of English sweeps on May Day, wearing caps of gilt and coloured paper, and coats made of the crusade balls of the preceding year, parade the streets all day with drums and rattles, crying, "Saw down the old woman." At midnight, parties of the commonalty parade the streets, knock at each door, repeat the same cries, and conclude by sawing in two the figure of an

old woman representing Lent. This diversion is emblematical of Mid Lent.

In commemoration of a wonderful dream, by which his life was saved during the siege of Newark-upon-Trent, by the Parliamentary forces, and as a testimony to God for vouchsafing it, Alderman Hercules Clay, by his will, left two hundred pounds to the Corporation of Newark, on condition that they should pay the interest of one hundred pounds to the Vicar, to preach an appropriate sermon every eleventh of March; the interest of the other one hundred pounds to be spent in penny loaves for the poor. From this circumstance the day is locally known as "Penny Loaf Day."

A very popular legend of Saint Patrick (March seventeenth), the Patron Saint of Ireland, who found his way to the Emerald Isle about the year 380 A.D., tells that he and his followers one cold morning found themselves on a mountain without a fire on which to cook their breakfast or warm their partly frozen fingers. The Saint, taking no notice whatever of their complaints or of the absence of combustible materials, desired his followers to collect a pile of ice and snowballs, which they having done, he breathed upon the mass, and forthwith it became a pleasant fire, so pleasant indeed, that it served to kindle the poetic fire of a poet, who thus records the event:

Saint Patrick, as in legend told—
The morning being very cold,
In order to assuage the weather,
Collected bits of ice together;
Then gently breathed upon the pyre,
When every fragment blazed fire!

The driving out of Ireland of all venomous reptiles was considered to be one of the greatest miracles, of his saintship. This feat, Colgan solemnly asserts, was accomplished by Saint Patrick simply beating a big drum, which he struck with such vigour, that he drove one of the sticks through. An angel, in obedience to a summons, promptly appeared on the scene and repaired the mischief, thereby enabling the Saint to accomplish his laudable purpose. For generations the drum was preserved as a sacred relic and exhibited to the faithful—on payment of course, of a suitable fee. Whether any of the Saint's power reverted to the drum on his demise, is unfortunately not recorded. It is also said that in order to conquer the Druids, who strongly objected to the new candidate for popular favour, Saint Patrick was obliged to curse their fertile lands, so that

they produced no flesh; to curse their rivers so that they produced no fish; to curse their very kettles so that with no amount of patience could they ever be made to boil; and, as a last resource, to curse the Druids themselves, so that the earth kindly opened and swallowed them up, leaving Saint Patrick sole master of the field. The shamrock became the popular emblem of Ireland, in consequence of Saint Patrick picking up one to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity to the Pagan Irish.

Some idea of the superstitious reverence in which this Saint is held by the Irish, may be gathered from the fact that the remains of the black belt of Saint Patrick used to be brought every year to the "pattern" at the top of Croagh Patrick, on Garland Sunday, where the pious pilgrims were allowed to kiss it, and, if any of them were suffering from rheumatic pains, they might put it three times round their body—on payment of a fixed fee—and an immediate cure was certain to follow.

The precise situation of his birthplace—like that of his sepulchre—has been disputed; but it is believed that he was buried at Downpatrick, and that beside him were the remains of Saints Columb and Bridget.

There is an old monkish legend which states that "on the hill of Down, buried in one tomb, were Bridget and Patricius, with Columba the pious." The anniversary of the death of this blessed Saint is observed with the greatest ceremony in the Catholic Church, and, wherever Irishmen are found, there the seventeenth of March is observed with the wildest enthusiasm. History records many serious riots on this day between Protestants and Catholics, not only in Ireland but in various parts of England.

According to a Scotch proverb, spring may be looked for when once St. Patrick's day has passed.

Perhaps it is hardly necessary to state that Palm Sunday—March the twenty-fifth—commemorates the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem on an ass, when multitudes of the people who were come to the Feast of the Passover took branches of palm trees and ran out to meet him.

In Catholic churches palms are borne in procession with great solemnity, and high mass is celebrated by the priest. An old superstition still exists which prompts people to secure a piece of palm which has been blessed by the priest, or which has been used in the decoration of a church on Palm Sunday, that they may never lack

gold during the ensuing months of the year. It is essential that a small piece of the palm be carried about in the purse, the freedom from pecuniary embarrassment depending on the presence of the palm about the person.

Formerly, at Caistor Church, Lincolnshire, the following singular ceremony was performed: A large ash whip, ten feet long, was brought by a deputy from Broughton. It was wrapped with white leather half-way down the stock, and the thong—a very long one—was also of the same material. The whip was termed a "Gad whip," and, at the commencement of the First Lesson, the deputy who stood at the door of the north porch of the church, cracked his whip loudly, after which he twisted the thong round the whip handle, put some strips of mountain ash lengthwise on it, and bound them together with whip-cord. After this he produced a purse containing two shillings, in default of twenty-four silver pennies, tied it to the whip-stock, and, throwing these over his shoulder, marched into the church. Arrived at the reading-desk he stood still until the commencement of the Second Lesson, when he approached the clergyman, waved the purse over his head, and knelt upon a cushion. In this position he remained until the end of the Second Lesson. The whip and purse he afterwards carried to the manor house of Undor, and it is said that certain lands in the parish of Broughton were once held subject to the conditions above named being carried out. A new whip was made at Broughton every year.

We now come to a very high feast of the Church of Rome—the Festival of the Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady, commonly termed by Englishmen for short, "Lady Day." It is celebrated on the twenty-fifth of the month, and of it Withers says: "The Church hath dedicated this day to memorize the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, Saint Mary, who was about this time of the year saluted by the Angel Gabriel, and we ought to sanctify it with praising God for the inexpressible mystery of our Saviour's conception, which was the happy news the holy angel brought unto His Mother."

According to some authorities, the festival was instituted about 350, while others assert that it was not before the seventh century. The religious Order of the Annunciation was instituted in 1232; and the military Order in Savoy, by Amadeus, Count of Savoy, in memory of Amadeus the First—who had bravely defended

Rhodes against the Turks, 1355. It is still a great festival of the Romish Church; but with us it is only remembered as being one of the quarter days, and the day on which vestries meet for the purpose of electing guardians and overseers for the ensuing year.

The lily, or fleur-de-lys, is regarded as typical of the Virgin, and became so, as the legend tells, in this manner:

"A noble, but untutored Knight, having entered a monastery, was so incapable of learning that he could only say 'Ave Maria,' and this he fervently repeated wherever he was. On his death a fair fleur-de-lys grew out of his grave with the words 'Ave Maria' in golden letters on every bloom; and the monks then understood this miracle to be the result of his devotions to the Virgin in life, and proclaiming the miracle far and wide, the fleur-de-lys, or lily, has always been the symbol or emblem connected with all representations of the Blessed Virgin Mary in religious art, and it is to this day one of the most common ornaments in decorative art."

An old Calendar of the Romish Church directs the preservation of eggs laid on Lady Day, probably as a remedy against fires.

It is recorded that towards the end of the last century a gentleman wrote a letter to a lady of rank in London, and sent it through the post with the following address:

"To the 25th of March,
Foley Place,
London."

The postman duly delivered the missive at the house of Lady Day, for whom it was intended.

THE GORDON BOYS' HOME.

THE region about Chobham, though not remote, is singularly wild in aspect, especially on a wintry day with snow lying in white patches, contrasting with the soil, which is almost black—not the rich blackness of the fens, but a kind of ashy grey which looks intensely dark in the distance. The heather, too, is all withered and black on the surface, although there are plenty of tender green shoots beneath. Here, indeed, we have the remains of the wild extensive moorland popularly known as Bagshot Heath, once haunted by highwaymen and thinly peopled by gipsies and deer-stealers.

which was long the terror of travellers by the western roads.

Since then, the great wild has been cut up and reduced by cultivation. Scattered farm-houses are surrounded by cultivated fields; roads and footpaths score the heath in all directions; country houses, too, and newly-built villas appear, planted on the wilds, which are not so wild but the baker's cart comes round with regularity, and the grocer calls for orders.

The way into this wild region — approached but not crossed by railways—is over the Basingstoke Canal, by a little high-crowned brick bridge: a canal which has itself a wild and eerie look, with its shaggy banks and its dark placid waters, now well-nigh frost-bound, and a barge in the distance poling its way through the floating ice bears an almost uncanny appearance.

But, in spite of the wintry aspect of things, the sun breaks out, and patches of blue sky appear among the shifting clouds. Here, near some hospitable door, the robin sweetly pipes his winter song from the delicate tracery of a silver birch. Over the dusky heath hovers a skylark, warbling and fluttering, and his song gives the feeling of spring, which will surely come, long as it may be yet delayed.

It would be difficult to find a more thoroughly countrified village than Chobham, or one less affected by the changes wrought by time. The road, as it winds, with the smallest apology for a footway by the side, and yet just enough to show that human habitations are at hand, passes between a stock-yard, an old tumble-down farm-house with barns and sheds leaning against each other, and then, without further warning, plumps among a handful of old-fashioned red and white cottages. Another turn, and there is the village inn, with its swinging sign lit up by a stray sunbeam; and the village shop, with the village shopkeeper and his man in the whitest of white aprons, unloading goods from a cart. The village spire rises beyond, tapering quaintly skywards.

Honest Dick or Tom, knights of the highway, might gallop up and call for a cup of ale, and a wash for the mouth of the steaming mare, and they would not look out of place in this village scene. Nor would it strike them as vastly changed from the days of old, when they robbed the Bath mail or stopped the flying stage.

And at this moment a sweet-toned bell chimes forth the hour of noon, and suggests that time is moving on everywhere,

and that we must not linger on the way, although the church—with curious features in the way of conical bell turret like a pepper-box, and quaint rudimentary transepts—with its quiet graveyard thickly planted with tombs, seems to invite delay.

Yonder lies the way to the Gordon Boys' Home. Everybody knows the Home hereabouts, and speaks of it in a friendly manner. For institutions in general the bucolic mind is not warmly sympathetic, nor welcomes their presence among its native fields. But doubtless the name it bears makes the Gordon Home welcome to the country side. A pleasant country lane leads westwards, by heath and farm, with an old house or two on the way. Here is one with florid Jacobean gables—a house that was once, no doubt, of manorial rank—with a vast solid chimney-stack, and the date 1651 carved over the entrance. Next the country lane brings us to an open common, with a little hamlet clustered about a triangular patch of heath, and a little church with a tiny belfry just beyond. And here the ground lifts a little and the view expands, showing dark ridges, known as Chobham Ridges, rising against the sky-line. And on the plain between was formed that camp of Chobham, the first stir of military movement after the slumbers of a long peace, in the year before the outbreak of the Crimean War.

But just on the crest of the rising ground there appears a group of new buildings, red brick, with red-tiled roofs, forming a quadrangular enclosure, completed with high red-brick walls. And just at this moment—breaking in upon the rural sounds of the hamlet, the hissing of geese, the banging of the blacksmith's hammer, the shouts of children just released from school—rings out sharp and clear a military bugle-call.

Yes, this is the Gordon Boys' Home, in its new quarters, just fresh from the builder's hands. The Home itself was started in September, 1855, with temporary quarters at Fort Wallington, on the range of downs above Portsmouth, the fort looking down on Fareham and the windings of Portsmouth Harbour. A beginning was made with twenty boys, and before long the number rose to a hundred, which was all the fort would hold. A fort half-buried within its grassy glacis can hardly be a very lively place of residence: yet the boys liked it well enough. To live in a real fort, surrounded by real cannon and munitions of war, commends itself to boys'

imagination. The boys, anyhow, held the fort gallantly enough, and marched out with all the honours of war to take possession of their new Home.

Well, it is a pleasant Home to come to, on this breezy heath, where the air is pure, crisp, and delicate; where there is plenty of room for all the games that can be played. And here is no tall, monumental pile to weigh upon the mind, and suggest your personal insignificance, but what you may call a roomy barrack square, with neat brick buildings occupying the sides, detached buildings leaving space for air and sunshine to play between. At the present moment, however, there is not a boy to be seen, nor a man—all is as quiet and as peaceful as an enchanted palace. But presently the Commandant is to be seen crossing the square, and in a moment he explains the mystery. The bugle-call was for dinner, at which function the boys may safely be reported all present. And with the opening of a door there comes forth a rattle of knives and forks, and a clatter of tongues, that effaces all previous impressions of peaceful tranquillity. It is Tuesday, and here is the bill of fare for the day: Ten ounces of roast beef, four ounces of cabbage, six ounces of potatoes, and suet pudding, a quarter of a pound to each boy. The pudding is a solemnity—that is, it does not come every day. Sunday is a pudding day, of course—currant pudding day. Monday is a blank in that way; but there is soup, which is good for boys, although they seldom appreciate it; soup and bouilli, indeed, is Monday's fare. Then on Wednesday there is rice and treacle following the roast mutton. On Thursday, boiled pork with pease-pudding. On Friday, Irish stew, with rice pudding. Then Saturday is celebrated with corned beef. Fill in this outline with an abundant allowance of bread and vegetables, and you will own that the boys fare very well.

And it must be said that the Gordon boys show the effect of their good fare. They were mealy-faced boys once, weedy-looking boys from City streets; now they are beef-faced boys, with a ruddy colour and plenty of bone and sinew. Here is the result of country air, good food, sufficient employment, and enough play, and, it may be added, of firm but kindly discipline.

While the boys are at dinner, we may go round the various buildings. The plan of the whole is an oblong quadrangle. On the south side stands, centrally, the most

important of the buildings, a block which includes a handsome dining hall, with high open roof and mullioned windows looking outwards over a wide stretch of country. In the same block are reading and recreation rooms, and library; but these were not in working order at the time of our visit, the block, though practically finished, being still in the contractor's hands. On either side of the hall is a detached dormitory. The dormitory is arranged with two floors, each containing a central chamber and two wings. The central chamber contains a comfortable room for the sergeant or instructor, with an unglazed opening on either hand, commanding a full view, and full hearing, too, of the dormitory on each side.

In the dormitory are arranged the beds, ten of a side, with plenty of space between; iron bedsteads, wire mattresses, and bedding, all neatly arranged army-fashion: each boy's kit in its place, and his carbine reposing beneath. As each wing contains twenty beds, and as there are two floors precisely alike in arrangement, it follows that the complete dormitory contains beds for eighty boys. The two dormitories, already completed, afford accommodation for one hundred and sixty boys. But the sites are ready for two more dormitories, and thus, with sufficient funds, the capacity of the Home might be at once doubled. In fact, the scheme admits of almost indefinite expansion, as the resources of the institution increase.

On the opposite side of the quadrangle is a row of buildings of one storey, containing workshops and offices, which we must visit later on when the boys are at work.

In a general way the day is divided pretty equally between work and recreation. The school and workshop are open three times a day, for an average period of two hours at a time. About a third of the boys are at school at one time, and two-thirds in the workshops or at other employment. It must be borne in mind that the limits of age for admission to the Home are between fourteen and sixteen years, an age at which School Boards cease to trouble themselves about the boys.

But a certain portion of the boys admitted are almost illiterate, although the greater part have already attained to a proficiency of the Third or Fourth Standard, while a few are found thoroughly grounded in their rudiments on admission. Thus with six hours' work and six hours' play, an hour or

more for meals, and an hour for drill—which is work, too, by the way—the average day is made up. The boys rise at half-past six in the winter and half-an-hour earlier in summer, and go to bed at half-past eight in winter and nine o'clock in summer. On Saturdays the boys are free to amuse themselves from noon to bed-time, and on Sundays, with the exception of the hours of divine service and religious instruction, they have their time to themselves.

But dinner is over now and the boys turn out for play. They have not the gaiety and abandon of a lot of public-school boys,—the book of sports has been a sealed book to them till they came here—but they have some notion of larking too, with playful sparring matches and other diversions. The tallest boy, perhaps, in the school bears the dignified sobriquet of the "Lord Mayor"—for this reason, that he was found destitute and starving in the City, and taken before his lordship, who kindly procured for him admission to the Home. When he had a holiday, not long ago, he went to see his friends at the Mansion House—smart and tidy now in Glengarry, blue patrol jacket, and trows of the Gordon tartan, the dress uniform of the Home, quite a soldier-like young fellow. He was kindly received by the officials, and introduced to the present Lord Mayor, who also was pleased to see him, gave him a word or two of encouragement and half-a-sovereign; and you may judge if that boy did not come home proud and delighted, while, of course, the other boys, to prevent his getting too proud, chaff him freely about his distinguished sponsor.

But here is another boy, the smallest and most insignificant, perhaps, in the school, who has kept apart from the sports of the others, and who now, as the Commandant approaches, draws himself up in line, with another boy a good deal bigger, and stiffens himself, and causes his companion to stiffen into a rigid military salute.

"Well, what is it?" asks the Commandant good-naturedly.

"If you please, sir, me and this other boy 'as 'ad no pudding," nudging the other boy to speak up, who bleats feebly,

"No, we hadn't."

"Ah, how was that?"

"No, sir, the corporal didn't make it go round, and me and this other boy," nudging his friend again, "we didn't get any."

There was a terrible sense of wrong in

that boy's accent; but what can be done when the pudding is all gone?

"We must make it up to you, my boy," adjudges the Commandant kindly, and the boys dismiss themselves and run off.

Then the bugle sounds for drill, and the boys fall in, all in their neat working dress of dark green cords; and when drill is over school and the workshops open, and we may make the round of them and see the boys at work. There is the drawing room first of all, where the boys who have any aptitude for the work are taught mechanical drawing—plans and sections to scale and working drawings, with the various mysteries of building work—Flemish bond, English bond, the arrangement of arches and jambs, of sashes, courses and what not—and very neat and skilful the boys' drawings are for the most part; and the knowledge they gain of the intricacies of construction will be useful to them in any condition of life. Then there is a smiths' forge which is not yet completed, and a carpenters' shop in full work, the boys planing, and sawing, and putting together brackets, shelves, tables, and anything of the kind that is wanted for the Home.

As we are half-way through the shops, three new boys arrive under the escort of a corporal; it will be understood that the whole establishment is conducted on the lines of military discipline, and that the best of the elder lads are promoted to be corporals, as it might be monitors in an ordinary school. Well, the corporal brings up his charge with all the importance in the world, three London boys, gamins all, of ready tongue enough, and quick-witted, whom the Commandant asks a few questions, and then dismisses to be initiated into the ways of the place by their comrades. Presently they will be measured for their fatigue dress and uniforms, and the tailors' shop will be occupied about them.

The tailors' shop is already pretty well occupied with a dozen or more boys sewing, and basting, and doing the whole duty of tailors under a master tailor, their instructor; equally busy is the shoemakers' shop: for these two workshops supply all the needs of the Home in the way of clothing and shoes, all of which are made by the boys under instructions, and very well made too.

The store rooms, the kitchen, with its extensive ranges and cooking apparatus, where two or more boys are constantly employed, gaining experience under the

head cook; the laundry also, conducted by the boys under the charge of an experienced laundress—the only female official within the walls—the bakehouse, with its hot air ovens, where whole battalions of little loaves are waiting their turn: all these are fitted up with the utmost care and completeness.

Then there is the guard-room, confinement in which is the punishment for grave breaches of discipline. We look in and find it tenanted by a very happy-looking party. There are the three new boys—not that they have done anything wrong—far from it, they are having their hair cut, regulation pattern, by the regimental barber (again one of the boys), a process which seems to afford great satisfaction to patients and professor. Then there are the cells for extra refractory boys; but these are happily tenanted only by cricket bats and stumps, footballs, and other implements.

As to cricket, by the way, there will be a good cricket ground in course of time. The site of the Home embraces fifty acres of land. Beneath that ashen grey crust, which will grow nothing but heather, there is a good substratum of sandy soil which is anyhow a capital vehicle for manure. The elder and stronger boys are employed in digging and trenching, and in building up the barren upper crust into a substantial vallum, or earthen wall, which will eventually surround the whole encampment. Then with green turf, and trees, and shrubs, and gardens here and there, the settlement will assume a bright and cheerful aspect in contrast with the dark heath, and the wild ridges that rise in the distance.

There is still the school-room to be visited, where the boys are at work with slates and copy-books. There is a short-hand class too, and another for the telegraphic code—those dots and dashes which also form the code of army signalling.

As a school for the army, indeed, the Gordon Home has already good results to show. Twenty-two recruits have by this time joined the army from the Home; and the best accounts have been heard of them from the regiments which they joined. "I wish we had a hundred of them," wrote the adjutant of a regiment in which four of the boys had recently been enrolled. One of the boys has joined the Royal Navy, two have entered the merchant service, and two have obtained good situations in Civil employment. And although no boy need enter the army

against his will, yet that is the career to which they nearly all look forward; and with the advantages now offered in the army, where with good health and steady conduct, an intelligent youth is pretty sure to do well, the future prospects of the boys seem bright enough.

As a memorial, also, to the man who, above all others, has touched the nation's heart whether as soldier, hero, or as martyr in the cause of humanity, here is an institution completely in accordance with Gordon's own desires. Already much generous and ready help has been given. A noble donation of five thousand pounds by a lady who wished to remain unknown, enabled the committee to start their building operations at West-end Chobham, with the result we now see.

As the Queen has graciously consented to become the patron of the institution, and the Prince of Wales, who is the President of the Council, has taken a warm interest in its success, there is no great danger of the claims of the Home being neglected. But all who honoured Gordon in his life and lamented him in his death—and which of us has not?—should try to do something for those who may be truly called his boys. Father and mother may have forsaken them; they may own no family ties, nor any associations with childhood but misery and want; but as Gordon boys they will have a name to be proud of, and to keep them straight in their future career, and, wherever they go, their countrymen will have a kindly feeling for them.

And now once more the bugle-call is ringing in the ears, and twenty or so of the boys turn out smartly from various parts of the buildings. There is a roll and crash of drums, with the spirit-stirring sound of fifes. It is the tow-row-row of the future grenadiers—you may believe that these boys play smartly and with a will. The bandmaster is in the centre, the boys are in a square about him, and away goes the tune, full-swing, waking all the echoes, and rolling forth over the hills and far away. Everyone stops to listen for a moment, and then work goes on again at an enhanced pace. Then bugles ring out, and the whole band with them, to one of those spirited bugle marches, that makes everybody step out with martial tread.

In time to come—by camp fires, on foreign shores, and far away—when they hear those strains, the boys will recall the old Home, the instructors, their kind Commandant, and the friends and comrades of these present

days. And now with cheerful music ringing in our ears, we bid a cordial "God speed" to the Gordon Boys' Home.

AT THE STORES.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

SHE was tired. A long day at the Stores, with a July sun beating down upon the building, is wearying; but when to all the harassing calculations as to the necessary details of a boy's school outfit, from a woman's point of view, are added the necessities from that same boy's point of view, then is that woman's life a burden indeed.

"Oh, I say, aunt, I don't want any more pocket handkerchiefs; but I can't possibly go to school without a decent racquet."

And when this same boy seems to have solved the problem of perpetual motion, to say nothing of an ubiquitous presence, it is easy to understand the condition of mind and body with which Mrs. Dale finally suggested an adjournment to the refreshment-room. Five minutes before she had seen the boy descending with interested face—which he vainly tried to make lordly and calm—in the lift, and had rejoiced over the prospect of some peaceful moments over the contemplation of socks, and here he was at her elbow again, with his usual preface to a new want:

"Oh, I say, aunt, what rot!" with a disgusted glance at the pile of hose on the counter. "I call that waste of money. I shall never wear all those things. It would be so much better to spend the money on a little spirit lamp and methylated——"

"And, pray, what part are those to play——?"

"Oh, to boil a fellow's kettle, or things. You never know——"

"My dear Steve, I know nothing. I thought I did, till I came here. But now I am willing to own my ignorance. Never will I pretend to the knowledge of a boy's necessities again. I am worn out—and have become a philosopher. We wear too many clothes. We ought to return to the simplicity of our ancestors, and clothe ourselves in blue paint and a fishing-rod. Let us go and have some tea. Perhaps a bun might be a reflection of some weight to your mind and body. If you can sit still five minutes without moving or saying

'Oh, I say, aunt, you know'—I will give you seven."

He tucked his arm with eager, grateful affection into hers, and led her off to the refreshment-room.

It was crowded; but after much important eagerness, with some slight pomposity, as befitted the dignity of his quest in her service, he found her a table. The order was given to the waiter; but scarcely had the boy sat down than he bounced up again, having caught a glimpse of a "fellow" at the farther end of the room. His aunt leant back wearily in her chair, as he plunged recklessly between the tables, looking after him with shining, loving eyes, which suddenly dilated and darkened into amazement, fear, anger, and a strange regretful pain. A man had suddenly risen from one of the tables between her and the schoolboys. She had not noticed him as he sat; but now, when he rose and shut out the distant prospect of her sturdy young nephew greeting his friend, she saw nothing else but this tall, slightly-built man, with his face still pale from a recent severe illness. His right arm was in a sling. He caught sight of her at the same instant. He hesitated for a second, his pale face growing paler. Then he strode quickly towards her. She looked down for a moment, toying with the parasol on her knee. When she raised her eyes again they were calm and cold.

"Major Huddleston!" she said with the same cold brightness, "what an age it is since we met!"

Major Huddleston coloured slightly as he took her hand, apologising for doing so with his left.

"I know," she said hastily, her eyes not quite so calm; but the waiter brought up the tea and cakes, and at the same moment young Steve came plunging back through the tables, regardless of the toes and feelings of the occupiers. "My nephew," she said to Major Huddleston; "and he is going to school in the autumn, and his mother asked me to bring him here to get his outfit. His name is Stephen Dale."

"Yes," said the Major.

It was a nephew of her late husband's. It made him think of that husband. Perhaps that was what she intended him to do, he thought, as he tugged at his fair moustache and looked gravely at the boy.

"And a jolly day we have had, too, though aunt is awfully tired. But we shall have to come another day; we haven't half finished."

"We shall have to come another day," she said, smiling with a sweetness that was angelic, considering what she had already gone through.

"And then we will see about that fishing-rod and things; and oh, I say, aunt, I really must have——"

"Another bun," said the Major good-humouredly. "I wish I could eat buns!"

The boy look up at him with scorn and some resentment.

"There's nothing to speak of in these buns. I could polish off a dozen."

His aunt and the Major laughed; and the sympathetic bond of that laughter seemed to draw them nearer each other. The brilliant coldness of her society manner vanished.

"Sit down in that chair and talk to us," she said genially, "if you are not in a hurry."

It was hardly likely that he would be in a hurry, when he had not seen her for fifteen years; but as he had never been gifted with eloquence when his deep feelings were concerned, he could say nothing now, and simply sat down on the third chair at the little table. He found it easier to look at and talk to the boy.

"And so you are going to school?" he said. "What are you going to learn to be——?"

"Oh, a soldier. Aunt says that any fellow she cared——"

"Steve," said his aunt with sweet severity, "don't speak with your mouth full."

"It isn't!" indignantly. "I never do, since you told me I looked like a pig in a hurry. Of course, I'm going to be a soldier, though Uncle Sam is angry and says it's only an excuse for being idle and dressing up! But then he doesn't know one end of a gun from the other."

"Uncle Sam—Mr. Samuel Dale, of Mincing Lane—has a large tea warehouse, in which is waiting a stool, its three legs pointing to wealth, consideration, and turtle soup unlimited," said his aunt, in explanation to the Major.

"Just as if he would ever catch me sitting on it!"

"But still Uncle Sam is a wise man. He knows what makes life comfortable. I think you ought to follow the legs of that stool!"

"There now!" in derisive and hurt scorn, "that's just like a girl. When you know that you've always been talking to me of the brave things soldiers do, and only two months ago I found you crying——"

"Steve, there's your friend beckoning you. Go and see what he wants. Boys do chatter so!" she said irritably to the Major, as Steve dashed off, "or else they don't——" with a sudden recollection which she as hastily put away. "Have you been long in England?"

"Only ten days. I am leaving again in a week."

"Leaving it again?" It seemed as if her breath caught a little. "Have you been at home much during the last fifteen years?"

"Not once; I came this time because——" He coloured, and glanced down at his disabled arm.

"Oh, yes! I know," she exclaimed, her face flushing into such a lovely colour and eagerness that the shadow of fifteen years vanished from it, and it was again in his eyes as the girl-face which had been so fair to him fifteen years ago. "I read all about your splendid deeds——"

"Such a duffer as that fellow is!" exclaimed Steve, at her side. "He has eaten more cakes than he can pay for."

She broke into a laugh. It was a little hysterical, but the Major, utterly confused at her allusion to anything so personal as his late proceedings, did not perceive the false ring, and Steve was too much bent upon getting his friend out of his unfortunate gastronomical difficulty. Her thoughts had gone back to the days when this man—this hero with his grand simplicity and modest gentleness—used to come to their house to spend his leave with his friend, her elder brother, under whose care she was. She was only in the school-room then, but it seemed as if, even in those days, he had not treated her as a child, so courteous, so kindly, so gentle he used to be. He would leave her brother's other guests to ride, or talk, or walk with her.

She had grown to look forward to his visits, careless, and light-hearted, and thoughtless as she used to be in those school days. And then her thoughts went forward suddenly to the last time she had ever seen him. She was grown up then. It was her seventeenth birthday, and that day she had been presented. Major Huddlestone—only Captain then—had come, with some other friends, in the afternoon to see her in her Court dress. But, in some way, it happened that they two found themselves at last apart from all the rest, and he had looked down at her in a different way to what he had ever done

before. He grew very pale as he told her how his battery had been ordered to India, and he had just begun a sentence when her brother came up and stood between them, making some foolish trivial remark. The sentence had never been finished. She had never seen Major Huddleston from that day to this. He had sailed with his battery a week later, and did not even come to say good-bye.

She had never quite forgiven her brother for breaking off that sentence, until the day he died, some ten years ago. She was married then to a rich City merchant. This marriage had been her brother's wish.

Thomas Dale was a good man, and had been a kind husband to her. He had been dead now three years, and she was a rich widow and free again.

But the man who had begun that sentence so long ago, had never shown any wish to finish it. All these thoughts, flashing through her brain, hardened her heart against him. She would not ask him to call on her.

"Do fly to that wretched victim of buns and tea, Steve," she said, putting her purse in his hand; "he looks wild and despairing; and then settle our own account. You can join me in the drug department afterwards. Good-bye, Major Huddleston."

It was awkward shaking a man's left hand, so she only bowed and turned away. The Major stood, pale and upright, looking after her, as if he never expected to see her again. She had not given him an opportunity of meeting her again. Then he suddenly remembered the boy. Steve had just finished settling his friend's account, and was rapidly returning to discharge their own. The Major looked at him. The boy's face was honest, and his eyes were kindly and true; and he seemed fond of his aunt, though he had done his best to worry her out of her life.

"Will you do me a favour?" he asked.

The boy looked astonished, contradictory, suspicious. He had a vague idea this might be the preamble to a request to relinquish his beloved profession. He was accustomed to this form of address when any virtuous, and therefore unpleasant, sacrifice was to be asked of him.

"It depends," he said, with a defiant negative in every feature.

The Major pulled out a card-case, blushing red as a girl.

"Look here," he said awkwardly, "the next time you come here I want you to

drop me a line to this address, and tell me the day and the hour you will be here."

"Me!" in unmitigated surprise.

Was the Major hoaxing him, or was he meditating some useful "tip," in the way of bat or fishing-tackle?

"Your aunt, too, of course," said the Major, more awkwardly than before. "But I want you to promise me that you won't tell her."

"I don't know," said the boy, after a pause, during which doubt, incredulity, dismay, chased each other across his frank face. "You see, aunt hates me doing anything underhand. She says a fellow who's a sneak isn't fit for a soldier."

"But I don't want you to be a sneak," said the Major, looking dreadfully ashamed of himself. "I only want you to send me a line to that address. It will be all right; only I have a reason for her not knowing. I will tell her all about it afterwards."

The boy fidgeted on his feet; but his eyes did not falter in their vigilant steadiness.

"I won't promise. Aunt says that if a fellow gives a promise, he ought to stick to it. She knew a fellow who once did that," he wondered why the Major blushed so again, "and nearly gave his life to keep it. But then she says, one must think well before promising."

"Very well," said the Major quietly. "Think it over. If you still think it is best not to give it, tell her all about it. But I wouldn't ask you to do a mean thing."

There was something in the quiet strength of his face, in the steady look of his eyes, that inspired confidence.

"If I write and let you know, and we come, I may tell her afterwards what I did?"

"You may tell her anything you like, afterwards. Nothing will make much difference then," he added to himself.

CHAPTER II.

"DEAR MAJOR HUDDLESTONE.—If I had known that you were the V.C. who did such splendid things two months ago, and got wounded, and all that, I would have given my promes at once, for I know you wouldn't do a meen thing. I asked aunt, and she said you couldn't, though of corse I didn't show her your card, nor tell her what you asked me not to. When I read your name on the card in the hansomb, aunt was looking out

in front and didn't see. I jumped so that I trod on her toes, and couldn't keep my feet still and she got a little angry, but I kept your card hidden and didn't say a word. Do you think I shall ever get in the army? I want to do brave things, like you; but aunt says I shan't, becoss I can't spell as if spelin had anything to do with spikeing guns, or going without food for two days that the other sick men might have more, and carrying your freind from under fire. Could you spell wel' at my age? If I had heard aunt call you by your name this afternoon I should have known at once, and could have ask't you how you got into the army. Aunt and I have been talking about you ever since. She told me it was you that kept that promes and saved the game-keeper's life, and nearly lost your own with the poochers. And I know she had been crying, for her eyes were red when she was dressed for dinner, and I think she cried because you did such splendid things. For she cried before, that time you got made V.C. Girls are so funny, they cry when we want to shout Hip Hip Hooray. Yours truly, STEPHEN DALE."

"I must not forget to say that we are going to the Army and Navy Stores the day after to-morrow at eleven o'clock, and I shall be glad when it is over; for though I know it isn't a meen secret, aunt's eyes always seem to go through a fellow when he has got one."

The Major could quite understand the latter sentence. He felt depressed already at the thought of meeting those clear, grey eyes, with the guilty consciousness upon him of having corrupted her faithful follower to act traitor against her.

It was difficult to say which felt most ashamed and uneasy, Major Huddleston, or the schoolboy, when they met at eleven o'clock at the entrance of the Stores. She was there, and her pleasantly-expressed astonishment at meeting Major Huddleston again made Steve grow as red as a young turkey-cock, and the Major look anywhere, rather than meet his desperate, remorseful, glowering young eyes. Steve had seen how white she had grown at first catching sight of the Major, and he knew at once that he had done dreadfully wrong. It was some slight relief to see her greeting him without anger a few seconds later, and to hear her saying that she was glad to see him again before he left England. This relief grew as, walking

behind his aunt and the Major, he heard one or two whispers from people passing them, as some men here and there recognised Major Huddleston, and pointed him out as the man who had, at the head of a forlorn hope, spiked the enemy's guns the other day.

In spite of his remorse, his heart began to swell with a kind of proud possession. He was in fellowship with this splendid man and soldier. He forgot how slender and precarious the link between them was. His former confidence in the V.C. returned, and with the determination that he would tell his aunt "all about it" directly they left the Stores, when the term of his promise would be ended, he gave himself up to the entire enjoyment of the position. He had been walking slowly and moodily behind, as he revolved the points of the situation. Now he hurried upstairs after them to catch them up, and to enjoy every moment of his hero's company. His aunt had stopped before the millinery department.

They were waiting for him apparently, as they both watched him, bounding up the stairs as if he were the most interesting thing in creation. The fact was that, owing to some thoughtlessly expressed reminiscence of Mrs. Dale's of her old school-days, the conversation had suddenly come to an end between them.

Steve flung himself like an avalanche upon them.

Major Huddleston had left his sling at home that day. He did not wish to offer her his left hand again, nor did he intend either, to let her go without their hands meeting. That light warm touch of hers had sent a throbbing of exquisite pleasure through his being. But when the young Steve, rough, impetuous, full of eager pride and delight, flung himself on him, and thrust his own arm through the wounded one, the sharpness of the pain sent the man white to the lips.

"Oh, Steve! Steve! See what you have done. Oh! Major Huddleston, he has hurt you," Mrs. Dale said, with a sudden rush of tears to her eyes, which drowned their hardness and coldness, and set the beautiful mouth quivering into tender, pitiful, loving lines.

"It is nothing," he said, and to prove it, laid the hurt arm about the boy's shoulders, and though every movement was physical torture, he was scarcely conscious of it in the exquisite delight that filled his heart and brain. At the revelation of her face, a great inspiration came to him.

"He does not want to buy old ladies' caps," he said. "Let him come with me, I want to look at a gun. How long will you be?"

"About a quarter of an hour," she said.

The next quarter of an hour was one of unmitigated bliss to Steve. As for the Major, it may fairly be said that for once in his life he was not conscious of any difference between one end of a gun and the other. He bought something at last, or rather Steve, who discussed the matter in its fullest bearings with the attendant, bought something for him. The Major was only possessed with one idea—to get back to the millinery.

"We mustn't keep your aunt waiting," he said, sinking deeply and shamelessly into the gulf of hypocrisy. "I will leave you to settle. Wait here until I come back. I shan't be long."

"All right, sir," said the boy, delighted to obey such a man, and still more delighted at his obedience being required in such a spot, where the atmosphere was redolent of sport and war.

There was food for amusement and contemplation for hours. Besides, it was something even to pay with another man's money for such a gun as he was still lovingly handling.

The Major had to wait five minutes at the entrance to the millinery department before she came out.

"Where is Steve?" she asked, suddenly feeling shy and nervous without his innocent, blustering presence.

"I have promised him an ice," said the Major unblushingly, so easy grow the steps of deception when the first one is taken. "Will you come to the refreshment-room with us?"

It was the only place he could think of. It was not a very private place, but there was always the chance of a table in the corner. Fortune favours the brave. There was a table unoccupied, and, as if this man were her particular favourite, there was no one seated at the tables in the immediate neighbourhood. He would have to make haste. People would be trooping in to luncheon.

But when the Major once came to a decision he always set to work to carry it out on the spot. He had made up his mind to spike those guns which were pouring such a deadly fire on his dying and wounded comrades, and he had buckled on his sword, and walked out and done it.

He ordered ices for three as the waiter bustled up. The ices were brought, and began to melt in the heat immediately. But neither he nor she noticed that they were there.

"A man feels strange coming back to England after so many years' absence," he said. "There have been so many changes."

"You should not have stayed away so long."

"What was there to bring me back?"

"Were your old friends of so little account then?" she exclaimed with a flash of angry disdain.

"I had not many friends in England—you know that I had no relations that I cared for. And then one of my best friends died—I should have liked to have seen your brother again."

"Dear Matthew! He was a very good brother to me, and I loved him dearly. But I think he was a little hard—where girls were concerned. He did not understand them." She thought of the arguments he had used to induce her to take that rich elderly merchant for her husband, and felt bitter; but then she remembered the tender kindness of that husband, and was softened and remorseful. But the vague unease and restless dissatisfaction which had stirred her through all that wealthy, comfortable, tenderly-cared-for married life, forced her into speech again; perhaps because this man's presence had made her so acutely sensitive to them. "He thought that a woman had only to marry a husband who could give her food and fine raiment to be happy!"

"But you were happy in your married life! If I had thought otherwise——"

"My husband was tenderness itself to me," she said as he stopped. "And what would it have mattered to you whether he were good or not, considering that you could not even take the trouble to say good-bye to me that time when you went away! And we had been, I thought, such good friends!"

"I could not! If I had, I should have broken my promise to your brother!"

"My brother! Your promise!" Her breath came hard and fast, and there was something in her eyes which made his fall for a moment before hers, so foolish, so heartless, so needless, did that look in them make that promise seem to-day. "Tell me what it was?"

"I will not say anything of that promise now. I will only tell you that it nearly

broke my heart in the keeping of it. But I had given it, and I kept it. Do you remember that day in the drawing-room? I was nearly mad with your sweetness and beauty. I began to say something, and then your brother came between us. He was right; for it was dishonourable of me to speak then. You were only just beginning your life. It would have been a shame of me to try and fetter you before you even knew what life was; and I was poor. Your brother saw what I felt for you. He was very sorry, but he made me see that I had no right to try and win you. He said truly that I had nothing but my love to offer you. You would not be happy, as a poor man's wife. He said too, that if you had grown to care for me a little, it would only be a girlish fancy, which you would soon forget, in the pleasures of the life opening to you. So I promised to leave you free, and I went away."

She drew in a long breath.

"Ah! How hard you both were to me!" she cried.

"But I loved you! Oh, how I loved you! I have loved you till this day. I would have come back when you were free, but I thought that you must have forgotten all about me. I remember the sentence I had begun, and I felt that you would hate and despise me for not having come back to finish it. Milly! Milly! Let me finish it now. I can't go away without you. Will you promise one day to be my wife?"

The ices melted away in their glasses, people came and went, and wondered as they ate their own luncheon, what those two in the corner had to say to each other, they talked so long and earnestly together. The waiter grew tired of hovering about to see if they meant to pay for the ices they had so recklessly wasted.

It was she who was suddenly aroused to the lapse of time by the remembrance of Steve.

"Where can the boy be?"

The Major's face was a picture of guilty dismay and contrition. He remembered his command to the boy. They went off hurriedly to find him, the Major confessing his sin in making him an accomplice to their meeting. They found the boy where they had left him. He had waited patiently there for nearly two hours, and at last, in utter weariness from the heat and inaction, had sat down in a corner and fallen fast

asleep. The attendant, smiling, pointed him out to them.

"He wouldn't go away, sir, as he had promised to wait for you here."

"He shall have that gun for his own. I am his debtor for ever!" said the Major, touching the sleeping boy on the shoulder.

"When he is old enough!" she said hastily, as the boy sprang up into eager, wakeful life. "I will not have him shoot himself before he can become a V.C., to make another woman as proud as myself." His eyes answered her. And there were no three persons so happy that day in the Stores as the beautiful woman, the V.C., and the school-boy.

BORN.

BORN this morning—and last night,
The pale moon's uncertain light,
Gleaming through a drifting cloud,
Lit his father's only shroud,
The great cruel northern sea,
In its dread immensity.

Born this morning. Yesterday,
When the black squall swept the bay,
Shivering in the sudden gale,
Shook and filled the broad brown sail,
And the coble "ta'en aback"
Foundered, ere the sheet could slack.

Foundered, with her four stout "hands."
Oh, the fatal Whitby Sands!
Oh, the cruel Whitby Scar!
The fierce rollers on the bar!
Few who 'mid their surge go down
See again the red-roofed town.

And among those hands he drowned,
'Neath whose cottage-eaves was found,
When another morning rose
O'er that scene of sudden woes,
A baby, born to wants and fears,
To baptism of widowed tears.

Born this morning. Little one,
Life has bitterly begun.
Scant the welcome thou canst find,
From the heart he leaves behind,
Till motherhood, from black despair,
Wakens love, to live and bear.

Sing his lullaby, oh sea!
Nurse and playmate thou must be.
Husband hast thou ta'en, and brother,
From that weeping wife and mother.
Hast thou aught of help to say
To the infant, born to-day?

Give the orphan for his dower
Something of thy joyous power;
Give him of thy quenchless might
With the blasts of fate to fight;
Teach him in thy ceaseless song,
How to "suffer and be strong."

Born this morning, orphaned ere
Load of life he came to bear.
Doomster, healer, soother, take,
Thread of life to mar or make,
Grief and presage, seeing, scorning,
Take the infant, born this morning!

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER XL. TEA WITH THE COLONEL.

No doubt it was the humility and romance of his own nature which made it impossible for Paul to understand Celia. Honestly, in many ways, he did not think himself good enough for her; and in spite of the things she said to him sometimes—things which filled him with a sort of "rapturous pain"—he could hardly persuade himself that she did not think so too.

Mrs. Percival's hint, that he might be a little morbid and distrustful, was not exactly needed, for any real distrust of Celia would have been unbearable. He believed that she loved him, not being able to conceive of any other reason why she should have accepted him; his ideal Celia certainly could not have been influenced by any of his possessions. Though she sometimes talked and generally behaved as if she cared for nothing deeper than amusement, fashion, fun, art, and money, Paul flattered himself that he saw beyond all this, and that she was generous, good, noble, clever, high-minded, earnest. Not exactly poetical or sentimental; but all the wiser and better and truer for that, perhaps; and he had enough of this nonsense in his composition for both of them. Possibly, Celia was all the more entrancing because she was matter-of-fact.

Now Celia, whose character was of the most simple and earthly description, could not help being conscious of the wonderful romance that was woven about her. It could not be helped; it was Paul's way; and sometimes it amused her very much. Sometimes it touched her, and almost awoke the fine feelings he imagined; then there had been instances of her really and honestly trying to make him understand her better. But those weeks at Holm, and Paul's constant companionship, had not done her any good. She was interested in Red Towers; she was well amused, and very happy in her own way; but she was getting a little weary of Paul and the heights on which he lived. Not that he often tried to drag her up to those heights, or tormented her with his thoughts, hopes, and opinions in any way whatever; but she was by no means

stupid, and she could not help feeling that his point of view on every subject was different from hers.

Paul, in fact, lived in a world from which at least half mankind are shut out—some people may say, fortunately for them—if he had not fallen in love with Celia he would hardly have found a word to say to her; and if Red Towers had belonged to anybody else, she would scarcely have been aware of his existence. Colonel Ward had a dim vision of these things before Celia fascinated him; but he had forgotten all about them now.

Mrs. Percival had not been without her misgivings; but she was not logical; and she was capable of shutting her eyes to what she did not wish to see.

Vincent, one is inclined to think, was the most clear-sighted among these people, when he said to his cousin:

"You can't marry a fellow like that—you!"

But then, Vincent's motives were interested.

His convictions were, however, strong enough to make him write that letter to Celia, which had disturbed her very much more than she meant or wished to be disturbed. While Red Towers was being prepared for her—while she and her aunt were beginning to be quite absorbed in the consideration of her clothes and all her arrangements, shopping in London, shopping in Paris, plans for the prettiest wedding that had ever been seen in Woolsborough Cathedral, the Bishop himself, perhaps, to perform the ceremony, and Dr. Chanter to play magnificently on the organ—there came a letter meant to upset everything, a letter which might naturally have perished by spontaneous combustion on its way through the post; perhaps the best thing that could have happened to it. But it crossed sea and land in safety, and was given into the hands of Miss Celia Darrell by the old postman on his white pony.

Celia was quite innocent in this matter. She had really gone out for a walk with Jack because she was cold, and rather cross—she did not know why. She met the postman quite accidentally as he rode up to the gate with his letter-bag, and, with her usual good-nature, she opened the gate for him. Then he said:

"I have got one letter for you, miss. Would you be pleased to take it?"

And then, seeing Vincent's writing and the Indian stamp, her first impulse really

and truly was to take it in to her aunt. But she opened it, and the first words were :

"MY OWN DEAREST CELIA,—I have written to my mother, but have not said a word of this to her. She treated me too badly in the summer to deserve my confidence ; therefore, I leave it to you to tell her what you please."

Having read so far, and glanced farther, Celia was conscious of a hot flush about her head, and a cold shiver everywhere else. This letter certainly was not for the public, and she positively must have a little time alone, to read it and think over it.

"Tear it up and take no notice of it ; that will be the best way and the least troublesome. It was very wrong of him to write it," said something in Celia. "I shall do no such thing," Celia answered herself. "He was badly treated, and it is a miserable world."

So she escaped into the wood, and found her way down into that distant corner, and sitting there she read her cousin's letter through and through again. What had Paul's letters ever been to this ? Unreasonable, dishonourable, selfish, it yet made Celia's eyes shine, and her heart beat fast, for a minute or two, as if Vincent himself were there, and she had again, for the first time, the triumphant feeling of his love for her.

What did he want her to do ? First, without a moment's delay, she must break off her engagement, which, in any case, was too impossibly absurd and unnatural to last long : or, if she did not choose to do this, she must put off her marriage a few months and break it off later. It must be done some time : she must understand that her marriage was out of the question. "You shall marry me," Vincent wrote, "though I fear we must wait three years. I have been promised an appointment in the spring, in an unsettled part among the hill tribes, where I could not take you. It will last three years ; after that I shall get something better. If you don't choose to break off this thing yourself, give me time, and I will write to my father and make such a row that they will have to let you do as you like. And that will be as I like, for you know you belong to me, and to nobody else in the world."

So he went on, with stronger language than he had ever used to Celia face to face, with all the arguments of a spoilt man, unable to realise or consider any claims but his own, forgetting too the coldness in Celia of which he himself had complained, which

might have made him doubt, at least, whether she would care to give up all her bright worldly prospects and wait three years for him.

Most men would have hesitated before they made such a proposal to a girl who had never confessed to anything but a cousinly fondness for them, and had never shown any wish or intention to break off her engagement. To write such a letter certainly wanted all Vincent's self-confidence, which was large.

"Why can't I be left in peace ?" Celia sighed over the letter, for it touched her enough to make her cross and unhappy. "I do hate being bothered. I thought he had forgotten all about it by this time : I am sure I had, nearly. Very nice, dear Vincent, to have such a letter from a splendid fellow like you ! I only wish—well, it's no use wishing. Things can't be perfect in this world, and I certainly have no right to be discontented. I should have to break Paul's heart, and I really shouldn't like to do that ; and then what an awful idea, to wait three years and then to go out to India, which I don't at all care about—and he might get an appointment in some horrid place, dull or unhealthy. Put off my marriage ! No, dear thing, by no means, if that is to give you a chance. I believe I would rather put it on."

With all these strictly virtuous reflections, Celia ought to have been glad to see Paul when he found her in the wood. But she felt the irritability that follows on being very good, and so was not altogether glad to see him.

In the meanwhile, a very interesting talk with Colonel Ward made Mrs. Percival almost unconscious of the long delay before her two young people came in. As she sat in the only comfortable chair in his drawing-room, with Di on the hearth-rug gazing at her devoutly, the other dogs having been turned out for the occasion, a cheerful fire crackling, and that same golden sunset light, which illumined the wood, shining in at the latticed window behind her, she began to think that this was really rather a pretty old room, and might be made something of. It was long and low, stretching across one gable of the cottage, with a window at each end ; the dark walls had a few good pictures on them, the floor was covered with a hideous old drab carpet, and the furniture was hopelessly frightful, severe, but not artistically so. But on the low mantel-piece, and on the top of an oak cupboard against the

wall, there were some very rare and beautiful pieces of Chinese and Indian china, an old French clock, at which Mrs. Percival gazed with envy, and some lovely ornaments in old French enamel—all quite thrown away on the Colonel, she thought. A fine Louis Quinze fan, which was lying on the mantel-piece, the Colonel presented to his guest to screen her from the fire. As she played with its mother-o'-pearl sticks, and examined its exquisite painting, she was still more struck with the inconsistency of worldly arrangements; it seemed more than absurd, actually wrong, that such a fan as this should belong to Colonel Ward, and not to her. Well, it might have been hers, many years ago, if she had chosen to take its owner with it. But in those remote days his uncle had not left him that good fortune which, besides his pretty things, was so utterly wasted on the poor old dear. He was not a miser, certainly; but how ridiculous, for a rich man to live in the way he did! This train of thought, while the Colonel was poking the fire and Barty was bringing in the tea-tray, led Mrs. Percival on to wonder, as she had often wondered before, who would be the Colonel's heir.

"Please don't wait for them," she said. "Celia may have lost her way and gone farther than she intended. The woods are really very puzzling. Or, at any rate, we must not wonder if they are a little long—the last of these happy days together. Only this morning Celia was saying to me how very good you had been to her, Colonel Ward—and indeed I feel it too. Oh yes, sugar, please. I never can imagine why everybody doesn't take it.

"Nor can I," said the Colonel.

He was not the least anxious about Paul and Celia, and looked the picture of happiness as he waited on his old love. Her brown eyes were smiling and shining in their sweetest way. She did not look as if she missed the Canon, or wanted anything she had not got. There was a sort of pretty tenderness in her manner to her old lover, who had remained unmarried all his life for her sake.

"I hope the young people won't hurry themselves for me," he said. "At this moment I'm a privileged person. As for Miss Darrell, and the pretty things she says, it is very kind of her; but I have sometimes feared that she must think me an interfering old bore."

"Now don't be silly," said Mrs. Percival in her soft sweet voice, smiling at him

over her tea-cup. "One doesn't expect affectionation from you. You know perfectly well that we could not have got on at all without your help. Our dear Paul is of no use, and would have driven us a little wild with his unpractical ideas, which were rather extravagant too."

"Well, you are very kind," repeated the Colonel. "Paul is the best fellow in the world, but it is true that he is too poetical for every day. Let us be thankful, for his sake, that he will have such a wife as Miss Darrell."

"Call her Celia," said Mrs. Percival. "She would like it, I'm sure, and so would Paul. My dear Colonel, you make me so happy. Do you know I was afraid, at first, that you did not very much approve of Celia?"

"Who told you so?" asked the Colonel quickly; he could not think that Paul had betrayed him.

"Nobody, nobody," said Mrs. Percival; "it was my own idea. But I understood it quite well. Of course you thought that Paul ought to make a better marriage. So he might—in some ways."

"The fellow's guardian, you see—I felt responsible——"

And then Colonel Ward checked himself, remembering that his charming friend was the wife of the fellow's other guardian, whose conduct he had so severely blamed. He handed her the cake, poked the fire, and then went on:

"I don't know why I should try to deceive you, Mrs. Percival. I thought Paul was too young and too boyish to know his own mind, and considering that a property like this is hardly so profitable as you would expect from its size, and needs a good deal of management to make the best of it, I thought that when Paul married, he had better marry a sensible woman with money. And I was barely acquainted with your niece, so that——"

"It never struck you that she had even one of these qualifications? Well, I don't wonder. I think you were quite right," said Mrs. Percival. "If Paul had belonged to me, I should have thought just the same." Then she looked up and laughed. "I never can remember that Paul is not a relation of yours."

"That is very natural. I make the same mistake myself," said the Colonel. "What is a relation, after all? I never had a relation to care for—except my old uncle. This boy's father was as near to me as a brother—nearer than some brothers."

"Of course he will leave him his money. What a match for Celia! She is a lucky girl!" thought Mrs. Percival. She said, after a minute, rather gravely: "You have certainly taken his father's place with Paul, and I don't think he ought to marry without your approval. Has he got it really, now?"

"Now that I have made the happy discovery that Mrs. Percival's niece is another edition of her aunt," said the Colonel in his stiff way, "I could not wish a better fate for my own son if I had one."

Mrs. Percival smiled, but a little doubtfully.

"I don't think there is much likeness; but I do honestly think they are suited to each other. Paul is very happy; we need have no fears about him. And as to Celia—it is no use fretting over the past, is it? But I only wish that my poor brother-in-law had managed his affairs rather better, so that she might at least have had something of her own. It is a little painful for a girl to bring absolutely nothing to her husband. Celia would feel it, I know, if she had not such perfect confidence in Paul. Oh, I can't tell you what a fortunate girl I think her!"

Colonel Ward looked very grave.

"She is fortunate," he said. "And so is Paul," he added, after a moment.

There was a slight change in his manner, and Mrs. Percival was quite aware of it. She did not know however that it was caused by the mention of her brother-in-law, whose name reminded Colonel Ward of doubts and anxieties he had almost forgotten. She thought of something else, for which she had long felt that they owed the Colonel some sort of apology.

"I hope you understood our motives," she began; "our reason for keeping Celia's engagement quite to ourselves for those few first weeks. I hope Paul explained to you——"

"Yes, yes," said the Colonel, a little absently, and this was very strange in him. "It was your own affair; you did quite right."

He was thinking of Captain Darrell and his character, and then of the steadfastness which was plain to him in Celia, and the frank charm of her manner—though, to be sure, Ford had said one day how much that free way of Miss Darrell's favoured the Captain, and had been terribly snubbed for his remark. These things happened every day. It would be too hard to make a child responsible for her father's faults.

It was not for long that he had thought of her as Tom Darrell's daughter. To him she must be Mrs. Percival's niece, Paul Romaine's wife; and these were two strong claims to the utmost of his faith and friendship.

"What is he thinking about?" Mrs. Percival said to herself, for she saw that his mind had strayed far away from her.

He was pulling his moustache, and staring blankly at the fire. After two or three minutes he got up, walked across the room, and unlocked an oak cupboard on the top of which some of his best china stood. From this he took out two small old leather cases, which he brought to Mrs. Percival, and laid on the table close beside her.

"My wedding present for Celia," he said. "I want you to do me a great kindness; to take them to Hunt and Roskell, to be done up and put into new cases. I am not likely to be in town myself at present. They can send them to you at Woolsborough, and you will then add to your kindness by giving them to Celia—with my love."

Mrs. Percival looked up at him, smiling with delight.

"My dear Colonel," she said, "I wish Celia could have heard you say that. But I am not going to be quite so obliging. Oh no; Hunt and Roskell must return them to you, and then you must give them to Celia yourself, when you come to the wedding."

"I don't think I shall be there," said the Colonel quickly. "No; you must really do me this favour."

As he spoke he opened the cases, and Mrs. Percival made an exclamation, though perhaps she was not entirely surprised, for she knew that Colonel Ward had some diamonds. These that he had chosen for his present to Celia were his very best; a star and a butterfly, both magnificent; they would have been a splendid present for a princess.

"Oh, my dear Colonel, they are too beautiful, too magnificent," Mrs. Percival murmured softly, and there were really tears in her eyes. "Surely there must be somebody—somebody belonging to you—who has a claim to these lovely things. Celia will not know how to thank you—she will have no presents approaching these. Really, I don't think I can let you do it."

"Lady Romaine's diamonds are better than these," said the Colonel, smiling. "She will have them, of course; and I

don't think a lady can have too many of such things. What use are they to an old fellow like me?"

"But you ought to leave them to some one in your own family."

"There is no one. Since I found that I should never marry—since Paul was born, I have meant them for his wife."

He looked down at the table for a minute, and so did Mrs. Percival, quite understanding the gentle hint that these beautiful things might been her own. There they lay flashing from their satin beds, which were yellow with age; but the stones in their everlasting youth looked ready to begin a new life once more.

"Don't tell Miss Darrell, please," said the Colonel. "If you will kindly promise me that, I will consult you about some other plans of mine—in confidence, I mean."

"Anything you like to tell me is perfectly safe," said Mrs. Percival earnestly.

Colonel Ward took up the cases, and put them back into his cupboard, saying, "I will send them to you." Then, coming back to the table, he poured out another cup of tea for Mrs. Percival.

"Our young people are behaving very badly," she said.

"I hope they will let me have ten minutes more with you," the Colonel replied gravely.

He then sat down and began to talk of his own affairs. Perhaps the deep sympathetic interest in Mrs. Percival's face was at first more apparent than real, for at that moment the exact amount of his income and savings did not seem to matter to her much. But when a man possessed of eighty or ninety thousand pounds begins to talk of making his will, his nearest friends must feel some amount of interest. And very soon Mrs. Percival was bending forward in her chair, her hands clasped, her eyes shining, her face pale with excitement, while her old friend ended all that he was telling her with these words:

"I intended, as I say, to make Paul my heir, to leave him everything. But in the last few weeks I have thought of a better plan—at least, I like it better—and a few words you said just now make me think that you will like it. You have forgotten—may I remind you?—you said it was painful for a girl to bring nothing to her husband. Well, my dear"—the Colonel's

clear blue eyes looked very odd as he forgot himself in this manner—"Paul's wife is Paul to me, and I mean to gratify myself by leaving her—I think about seventy thousand pounds—"

"Oh no, no!" cried Mrs. Percival, flushing scarlet.

"Why not?" said the Colonel quietly.

"It is too much. Celia doesn't deserve it. She has no claim on you."

"It is not a question of claims. Neither has Paul any claim; but he is my dear old friend's son, and Celia belongs to you."

At that moment the click of the garden gate announced Paul and Celia.

"Don't make any difficulty, please," said Colonel Ward, gravely and quickly. "Only oblige me by keeping my plans to yourself. The thing is not done yet, and I do not wish her to know before her wedding day."

Mrs. Percival had started up from her chair, and was standing by the chimney-piece. At that moment she could find no words, being torn by a conflict of feelings; her eyes were full of tears, and she held out her hand to her old lover, who stooped and kissed it, just as he had kissed Celia's one day.

Mrs. Percival laughed at Paul and Celia when they came in, and teased them for being so long; the Colonel was grave and polite as usual. One thought went on tormenting Mrs. Percival, while she was the life of the little party.

"Seventy thousand pounds! My poor Vincent! If Celia had that, and he could marry her!"

And the instant answer, "It is only her marrying Paul that gives her a chance of it," was strangely enough of no use whatever in driving that thought away.

As they were travelling up to town the next day, Celia said to Mrs. Percival:

"I had a letter from Vincent yesterday. When you write, will you give my love to him, and say I will answer it soon?"

"Yesterday!" said Mrs. Percival.

"Yes. I met the postman on the road. I forgot to tell you."

"What did he say?"

"Vincent? Oh, nothing particular. It was a very kind letter."

Celia looked out of the window, and her aunt did not find it necessary to say any more.

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"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XI. "MISS HICK."

DAY after day passed, and nothing more was heard from Fred, to his father's great uneasiness; which, however, he contrived to disguise, not only from his guest, but from his wife and daughter. Why suggest to them a trouble that might never come? If it never came, they would have been troubled for nothing; and, if it did come, they would have been troubled too soon.

Wherefore the Vicar made light of Fred's unaccountable absence and silence; except in his apologies to his guest, and then politeness required him to make much of them.

Gower, however, was much more than resigned to his friend's absence, since to it he owed hours of May's intoxicating companionship. By this time, the too susceptible youth was so hopelessly in love that he waited only for a little more courage and a little more encouragement to propose. That he had received already a great deal of encouragement he had no doubt at all. Though shy, he was very far from being modest, and he therefore found most encouragement in what should have most discouraged him—May's frank fellowship. If he had had any adequate idea of modesty—not to say of May—he would have known that her free and open manner; her jests, verbal or practical; her readiness to accompany him everywhere, and her eagerness to please him in everything, were the most certain signs of her absolute indifference to him. But, judging her as he might justly have judged Pattie Pratt, he read all these signs the other way.

Besides, the idea of his own social importance, which the anticipation of his father's immediate death had helped him to realise so vividly, was in itself as great an encouragement to him as May's winsome manner. Did it not account in some part for that manner? Would she have shown herself so winning at once—from the very first day of his visit—to one of less social importance? No doubt she liked him now for himself; but her cordiality, before she had known him, could have been shown only to the son and heir of Sir George Gower.

Like Slender, who, in his suit to Mistress Anne Page, did not forget, or allow others to forget, his relationship to Shallow—"a Justice of the Peace in his country, simple though I stand here"—Gower was not unmindful for a moment of the great start in the race which his prospects as his father's son and heir gave him.

On the whole, then, what between his love-lornness, his sense of self-importance, and his construction of May's free friendliness, our shy and susceptible wooer needed but a slight impulse to push him over the brink of a proposal.

But of this May, in spite of Con's caution, had little real apprehension. Of course, she saw that he admired her; but so did Mr. Spratt; and a proposal from Mr. Spratt would have seemed to her less unprovoked than one from Mr. Gower. The fact was, she made the natural, but serious mistake, of supposing that Gower estimated himself at her light valuation; which, if different, was not higher than her valuation of Mr. Spratt. And she could not see that she had given either gentleman any encouragement, since her sprightly, frank, and pleasant manner was as natural to her as her breathing, and was no more

emphasized for Mr. Gower or Mr. Spratt than it was for Mrs. Sugden or Miss Brice. If she had grown more, instead of less, reserved upon acquaintance, Mr. Gower might have had ground for encouragement; but such a girl as May was the last in the world to wear her heart upon her sleeve in the sight of the man who had won it.

While things were in this critical state, May received the following letter from an eccentric old maid in the village, Miss Hick.

"MY DEAR MAY,—You have given me up altogether of late for 'a very good reason!' Do you think you could tear yourself away for an hour? It's not Miss Brice, though I *do* think something ought to be done; but there's no use speaking to your father even if he *could* stop him marrying any one he pleases, and even the Bishop couldn't, I suppose; but it's a *very great scandal*. However, it's not *my* business, and it's about something else I want to see you—something *very important*, that I can speak only to *you* about. You will come at *once*, I know, whether he can spare you or not! Yours very affectionately,"

"MARTHA HICK."

"Any news, dear?" asked her father at sight of May's perplexed face after she had read this letter.

"No, father; it's only from Miss Hick asking me to call," she said, handing the letter to her father.

"I don't know how you can say there's no news in it, when she tells you that scandal is not her business, as if she had any other business under the sun!" cried the Vicar impatiently. "I suppose it's Spratt, though the poor little man has hardly yet recovered from her marriage of him to Miss Walmsley."

"It must be Mr. Spratt," May replied, after another look at the letter.

"That woman is a perfect mischief mill," broke out the Vicar, in his rage at the suggestion in the letter that May had met more attractive—obviously Gower—to keep her at home. "That woman is a perfect mischief mill. Out of a few slender threads of fact she spins yards of the most scandalous fictions. But she has a curious history, which, perhaps, explains or excuses her delight in scandal." He then proceeded to inform his guest that Miss Hick had had a disappointment in love at the mature age of thirty-five, when such disappointments, like the measles, are less easily got over. A Mr. Skipwith, a Curate of his immediate

predecessor, had won her too susceptible heart—intentionally as she believed; but innocently and unconsciously, as he protested. To give him an excuse for frequent calls upon her she had feigned an illness, which prevented her attendance at church, and demanded his attendance at her home for the ministration of the consolations of religion to her. In those days she was the main support of all the Parochial Societies and Charities, and, indeed, of Mr. Skipwith himself, half of whose stipend she paid, and half or more than half of whose board she furnished. She sent him presents almost daily of all kinds of provisions, especially those of a substantial kind. In return for this generosity, Mr. Skipwith was constant in his attendance upon her; interchanging his spiritual for her temporal advice. For, in all his difficulties with his Vicar, his work, and his parishioners—and he contrived to have some on hand always—he had recourse for advice to this elderly Egeria. In truth, though she was but ten years his senior, he regarded her so much more as a mother than as a possible wife, that he confided to her his engagement to Miss Wade, the daughter and heiress of a retired wine merchant! Miss Hick forthwith went into hysterics, and, upon coming out of them, dismissed Mr. Skipwith, not only from her house, but from his curacy; for she at once withdrew her grant in aid of his stipend.

Henceforth, she held in unceasingly and unappeasable detestation—not the clergy in general—but only Curates; as though Curates differed as essentially from Rectors, as grubs from butterflies.

The furious and foolish disturbance she had made about the matter in the first frenzy of her disappointment was bitterly regretted when, upon coming more to herself, she found herself the laughing-stock of the parish. This shame kept her still indoors under the same pretext of illhealth, until, from habit and from indolence, she grew to hate the idea of going abroad.

Nevertheless, if the mountain would not stir, Mahomet might come to it; if she would not visit the parish, the parish should visit her. She contrived to make herself indispensable in one way or another to so many people, that she had a crowd of visitors with whom she did a large business in gossip. As a merchant or middleman she stayed at home, while the rest came and went, imparting gossip and supporting it when manufactured into scandal. In fact, all the foul linen of

the parish was brought to her house, and often got mixed in her mind—even as foul linen gets mixed sometimes at the laundress'—and was sometimes mis-sent to the wrong address.

"Fortunately she has become such a proverb for canards that no one believes her."

"She can't really mean to make mischief, for she's very kind-hearted," urged May.

"To herself," retorted the Vicar, still angry. "She scatters scandal and money from just the same motive, self-gratification; and, because she's thinking only of herself, she often does as much mischief with her money as with her tongue."

"Oh, but she's unselfishly kind-hearted, too; she is indeed," May pleaded, remembering many acts of kindness kindly done by Miss Hick to herself.

"Well, perhaps she is," her father admitted with reluctant justice. "But she does ten times more evil with her tongue than she does good with her hand. I wonder what mare's nest she has found now for you?"

"I have no idea," May replied, though, as she spoke, a sudden misgiving that it might somehow be something about Fred crossed her mind; but then she was now always dreading to hear ill news of Fred. Fearing that her father also might suspect this—of which there was not, of course, the remotest danger—she turned suddenly to say to Gower:

"You must go to see her."

"I? Why should I go?"

"Oh, because everyone goes; and it's the only pleasure the poor old soul has."

"Seeing me?"

"She has not come quite to that yet; but she may when she knows you, she's so odd," May answered laughing.

"I will go with pleasure if you will be so good as to take me," Gower answered eagerly.

May shook her head decidedly.

"She wants to see me alone; but father can take you."

Her father, however, remembering what May had overlooked—that Miss Hick would be sure to chaff Gower about her—said significantly:

"She would only talk like that letter to him—all kinds of rubbishy gossip."

May, understanding the allusion, coloured, and turned to busy herself with Kathleen, while her father changed the conversation.

May lost no time in hurrying off to see the old lady, having still a disquieting pre-

sentiment that it was of Fred she was going to hear, though it was hard to imagine how Miss Hick—with whom Fred was no favourite—could hear about him anything that neither his father, his friend, nor herself had heard.

Miss Hick had lived in the bow-window of one of the many large rooms of Hemmersley Lodge for over a quarter of a century, under the pretext—in which she had long come herself to believe—that she was a chronic invalid. She did not look it, certainly, for she was a fat, sleek, rosy little woman, who always reminded you somehow, by her plump figure, her little turned-up nose, and her restless and twinkling eyes, of a podgy little pig who grunts up at you expectantly when you stoop to look at him over the sty-wall.

"Well, my dear, you've come at last; but, of course, I understand; don't apologise," she cried in one breath, nodding and smiling.

"I couldn't get away from Mr. Gower, if you mean that, Miss Hick," May answered, with such absolute and unconcerned coolness as upset altogether, for the moment, that good lady's little romance. "He's too fascinating—too, too," she added, nodding emphatically.

"Oh, but, now, really?" gasped Miss Hick, utterly defeated by May's audacious tactics.

"Yes, really; just wait till you see him for yourself."

"He was engaged already!" cried the old lady triumphantly, after a pause of profound perplexity over this riddle.

"How did you know, Miss Hick?"

"Because, if he hadn't been, he couldn't have resisted you, my dear."

"But how did you know he had refused me?"

"Now do be serious, May. Who is she?" she asked with life-and-death earnestness, though she knew nothing of Gower but his name.

"That he's engaged to? But I didn't know even that he was engaged till you told me, Miss Hick."

"I! Why you told me yourself this moment that he was engaged!"

Having tried earnestly, yet all to no purpose, to get this idea out of Miss Hick's head, May changed the subject.

"But you wanted to see me, Miss Hick?"

"I wanted to know about Fred, my dear. What is it now?"

"What is it?"

"My dear, I know all about it; so there's no need to make a mystery of it to me."

"What have you heard, Miss Hick? Do tell me," cried May, with agitated eagerness.

"I have heard from himself!" Miss Hick rejoined triumphantly. "If he confides in me, you may, I think."

"But I really know nothing at all about him, Miss Hick. He has not written to me since he went to London. What is the matter? Do pray tell me."

But, as Miss Hick had really nothing to tell—for she had been playing merely a game of brag—she turned upon a sudden, compunctious and discreet.

"As he has not written to you, I don't think he would wish me to speak about it, even to you, my dear. Indeed, he asked me to say nothing of it to anyone; but I thought that he must, of course, have told you."

"He has written to ask you to lend him some money; but I knew he wanted some," May answered, now absolutely certain that there was nothing else in the letter; for, otherwise, Miss Hick could not possibly have contained herself. Besides, as Fred would as soon have chosen the local paper as Miss Hick for a confidant, plainly nothing but the direst pecuniary necessity could have driven him to apply to her.

"But what for, my dear? What for? That is the question."

"Has he told you?"

"He couldn't tell either you or me, my dear, in so many words, you know," Miss Hick replied.

"Then he has only asked you for a loan?" persisted May, mercilessly.

"Because he couldn't tell me or even you, my dear, what it was for. Depend upon it he has got entangled with some girl, and he's trying to buy her off. Breach of promise, you know, or something of that sort," she added, mindful of May's maiden innocence.

"It isn't that at all, Miss Hick; it isn't, indeed," May urged, foreseeing the immense amount of mischief the scandalous old soul might make of her own mere imaginings. "He has got into debt by returning the entertainments of his friends. He told me so himself."

"Oh well, my dear, it is not my business."

"You can't help him?" faltered May distressfully.

"I don't think I could, conscientiously, dear, without knowing what the money was for."

"He will tell you, I know he will, if—you'll promise not to mention it," May cried eagerly.

"But he says he must have it by return of post to be of any use to him. There wouldn't be time to hear; and that's why I sent for you, dear, to ask you about it."

"Do pray send it to him, Miss Hick; pray do. He may be in some great trouble."

"You will be in great trouble if I don't, I see, my dear; and so it's done," said the old lady, nodding very kindly at May, whom she loved probably better than any one else in the world.

May started up and kissed her effusively, and then Miss Hick sent her for pen, ink, paper, and cheque-book, to get the business done out of hand and off the girl's mind.

"And, Miss Hick," said May rising when the letter had been given her to post, "you won't talk about it, I know."

"Of course not, dear; but you mustn't go, I haven't had a word with you yet. No, no, you sha'n't go indeed. You must sit down and tell me everything."

"I really don't think I have anything new to tell you," May said as she re-seated herself, "except that Mr. Sugden has given us the field."

"He must be going to die, or break, then. He'll never go through the eye of a needle."

May laughed at this apt application of Scripture to Mr. Sugden's camel-like bulk.

"I have always found him very generous," she protested.

"To you, my dear; he can't resist a pretty face. Perhaps it would be as well if he could," she added, with a significant shake of the head.

"It will be a great improvement to the school."

"And a great convenience to Miss Brice and Mr. Spratt, my dear. Much more convenient than Brick Lane."

"How do you mean?"

"My dear, they're always together in Brick Lane."

"Mr. Spratt and Miss Brice!" exclaimed May, laughing in spite of herself, at such a Strephon and Urania, and at the Arcadian rendezvous of Brick Lane.

"Ask Dalby, the butcher's boy, if you don't believe me, my dear; he saw them walking together there last Saturday," cried Miss Hick triumphantly.

"Yes?"

"Now, May dear, you know just as well as I do that he's paying her attention."

"You don't know Mr. Spratt. He wouldn't stoop to pay attention to anything but a black-beetle. And, as for Miss Brice, she's engaged already—to Canon Burfield's Scripture-reader, Mr. Judd."

"It's quite time, then, she told Mr. Spratt of it."

"But Mr. Spratt is to help to marry them next month."

"Then it's time Mr. Judd was told of his attentions."

"But I assure you, Miss Hick," protested May earnestly, "Mr. Spratt hasn't any attentions. He never had any; he was born without them; he was indeed."

"Ah, my dear, you don't know them," "them" meaning the male sex generally, but Curates in particular—"of course he'd tell you that he was only collecting black-beetles with her; though, why he should choose her to collect them with him in Brick Lane—"

"Oh, but he didn't tell me anything of the kind."

"My dear, you said this moment that he was not paying attentions to her, but collecting black-beetles with her in Brick Lane."

"I only said his mind was too full of black-beetles to pay attention to her, or any one."

This description of Mr. Spratt's mind, as swarming, like a cellar kitchen in a seaport town with black-beetles, did not at all reassure Miss Hick.

"I don't think that's any excuse, my dear," rejoined the old lady with exasperating irrelevance, "he may not have very nice tastes, but he ought to remember his position as a clergyman. Of course I know Miss Brice is a great pet of yours; but she's not a lady, and that makes it all the worse if he means nothing, as you say; and if she's engaged to—to— Who did you say she was engaged to?"

"Canon Burfield's Scripture-reader, Mr. Judd."

"He wears a soft hat, and a long coat, and a red beard, and walks as if he were in a sick room!" cried Miss Hick, with almost breathless eagerness.

"And long hair, and an umbrella, and dark-grey trousers with two sets of knees to them, and eyes with all the colour washed out, perhaps from his chronic cold in the head. That's him!" cried May, laughing at the old lady's ravenous eagerness to identify a Leeds Scripture-reader.

"So she's engaged to him, is she? A Scripture-reader! Ah! my dear, you

never find a man take to the trade of religion that's fit for any other trade—never."

"Clergymen?" asked May, assured of putting the old lady to confusion.

But she was not put to confusion at all.

"There are not many clergymen like your father, my dear. Look at the Curates! Is there one of them who would have got into any other profession? And it's the same with Scripture-readers among the lower classes; it's only those that are fit for nothing else that take to it."

May was amazed by Miss Hick's views on this subject, being as clear, decided, and pointedly expressed as they were caustic. But Miss Hick, having brooded for so many years upon her bitter grudge against the Church, had not only formed, but formulated almost epigrammatically in her mind, her disparaging views of the clergy.

"My dear, I hope you won't marry a clergyman till you meet one like your father. This Mr. Gower isn't going to be one, is he?"

May laughed at the suggestion of so preposterous idea.

"You've almost persuaded me that he is."

"I, my dear!"

"As you say, it's only those that are fit for nothing who take to it! I don't think he's going to be anything but his father's son, which is as easy a profession as even the Church."

Then Miss Hick made greedy enquiry into Sir George Gower's birth, position, income, number of family, and so on, and could hardly be persuaded that May knew little more than herself about them.

"It may come off yet, my dear; he's too young to know his own mind," she said at length with a knowing nod and smile, alluding to the possibility of Gower's jilting his fiancée in May's favour.

"He certainly doesn't know it as well as you do, Miss Hick," May rejoined laughing.

UNPROFESSIONAL CRITICISMS.

IN looking through the contents of the Free Library of a large manufacturing town, we have often been as much diverted by the pencil annotations in the margins as by the matter of the volumes themselves. These marginal notes are expressions of mind, mood, or character. They are the legacy of early readers to their successors; and we have again and again been tempted into reverie, the better to realise

the persons and idiosyncracies of these our predecessors. Experience has taught us that love-passages the most invite underlining and comment. When, therefore, we open one of Trollope's novels, we prepare for a double treat. Girls and boys take up the black-lead cudgel on behalf of human nature, and approve or disapprove of the love conversations and narrative with a freedom and assurance which can only come from an innate sense of knowledge and propriety in affairs of the heart. Their "Ohs," and "Very trues," and "Capitals!" and "Boshes!" are so many triumphs and reproofs for the author. They are to him what the shouts and hisses of the gallery are to the dramatist; and, if he be wise, he will not hold them in supercilious contempt.

Again, when we find the phrase, "beautiful blue eyes," in George Eliot's "Mill on the Floss," underlined once as a whole, "eyes" twice, and "blue" thrice, we can follow and appreciate the train of thought and sensations that led to the marking, and see the flush thereby excited in the smooth cheeks of the reader. The words reproduced a mental portrait of someone known to the annotator, and were therefore irresistible.

The "people" are nothing if not impartial in their criticisms. They have but one standard—their feelings; and to this they are eternally faithful. Thus when we find George Meredith's "Rhoda Fleming" censured with "Turn it out!" "No good!" "Rot!" "A silly book!" and the like, we are bound to acknowledge that, by the standard of its judges, the book is justly condemned.

We will begin by considering Mrs. Oliphant's "Adam Græme." We read the opening paragraph:

"The first thing which I can record concerning myself is that I was born——"

Then the word of comment "Wonderful," fills up the line, and extrudes itself into the margin. From the handwriting, we conjecture that our commentator is a lady, or, rather, not a gentleman. She has brought the three volumes home for amusement and instruction, and now, having had her tea, she sighs away the burden of care which has come upon her during the day, and prepares for relaxation.

"The first thing which I can record," and so on.

"Dear me! what a remarkable fact! Why, Mrs. Oliphant might as well tell us that the gentleman has two eyes, two

legs, two arms, and so on. Of course he was born, and why anyone should think it worth while to say so, I can't imagine."

The mood satirical awakens the baby power of criticism in the reader's mind, and, feeling for her inch of pencil, she writes, in delicate, incisive characters—"Wonderful!" Then, with her mind relieved, she proceeds to the next paragraph:

"That I was born! I, who now sit in this remote and solitary study, of whose mysteries my good neighbours speak reverently with doubt and wonder, encompassed with things immortal; the everlasting elements without, the stream, the hills, the fruitful earth, which has been and shall be until the end of time; within, with things of life, fated perchance to live longer than this present world, the books of men—the Book of God—that out of darkness, and sleep, and unconsciousness, I was born!"

This is a poetical idealisation of Adam Græme, the hero of the tale, sitting in his study, surrounded by articles which, though matter for reverent doubt and wonder with those who knew not what they were, were nothing more than a number of books, a pair of globes, a few stuffed animals, and sundry pictures and relics, such as a museum would scarcely say a civil "thank you" for; surrounded immediately by such transitory things, but also, more mediately, by those more permanent creations of Nature—hills, rivers, and, in short, the earth we live upon; and lastly, himself in turn surrounding, or rather containing the knowledge obtained from books, and the Book of books! A picture of concentric circles—the earth, the study, the hero, the soul of the hero!

"Good gracious!" here says our Mary Jane, in a pet of impatience, "what a to-do about nothing!"

But as she cannot spare time to re-read the paragraph to make sure that it means nothing, she merely marks it with the lead. Then, being again eased of the task put upon her by her exacting intellect, again she turns to the book. To her joy—oh foolish, impatient Mary Jane! yet, oh wise and prescient Mary Jane!—she finds that her critical faculty has not deceived her. For she reads as follows:

"These are wonderful words. This life, to which neither time nor eternity can bring diminution—this everlasting living soul, began. My mind loses itself in these depths. Strangely significant and solemn

are the commonest phrases of our humanity. . . ."

"Just my own thought!" says self-appreciatory Mary Jane, with a jealous flout at the authoress for filching from her the credit as originator of a good criticism. "The sort of book I could have written myself, I can see!"

And then she reads on and on, rendering unwitting homage to Mrs. Oliphant's skill as a romancer.

Yet stay! Our Mary Jane is impelled to carp once more.

"I felt," says Mrs. Oliphant, "large drops of moisture burst upon my brow; I shuddered through my whole frame; I felt an irresistible inclination to flee away, and escape from all these miseries for ever."

Mary Jane puts her pencil through "flee," and metamorphoses the rhetoric into plain matter-of-fact by substituting the word "go." Dear Mary Jane, your endeavour is commendable. You have a natural abhorrence of fine writing. You yourself are not in the habit of enduring distempered moments, when reason is dethroned within you; therefore, you cannot believe in such spiritual exultation as is the outcome of a peculiar combination of circumstances and temperament. "'Flee' away," indeed! Fudge! If he must take himself off—though the need is not apparent—let him simply shake himself together, open the door, and saunter, with his hands in his pockets, wherever his whim may lead him. As for fleeing! why, men and women never "flee." Ghosts and goblins may; but who shall vouch for even them in these days of disbelief in spiritualism?

Mary Jane, you err. Mrs. Oliphant is right, strange as it may appear. You are, in fact, twice wrong: wrong in altering what is not wrong, and wrong—even if you had been right in this—in not putting your pencil through the next verb in the sentence, and giving us a word to harmonise with the sober "go" of your choice. "Go away and escape from," is short leg and long leg. We should as soon think of saying that you, Mary Jane, were beaten black and brown—Heaven avert the contingency! No; if you must be critical, be consistently so. Don't let your vexed mind merely dabble in the mistakes of the writers who come under the ken of your terrible intellect; but remove your shift of mercy or negligence, and plunge earnestly, "sans everything," into the invigorating task

that seems put upon you. But there, don't be discouraged; don't fret. We do not blame you. Do but accept our admonitions in the spirit in which we offer them to you.

Our next subject comes from Goldsmith's comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer." We are attracted by the last criticism in the volume. Mr. Hardcastle says: "O Lud! O Lud!" etc. in explanation of which our popular commentator adds in the margin: "Lud—corruption of Lord! therefore swearing."

The handwriting is round, the letters are pot-bellied; and under the annotation is a thumb-mark which, by the aid of our science and second sight, we pronounce to have been wrought by a lad of fifteen or sixteen. We will call him Erasmus Meditation. Your business, Erasmus, is that of eighth assistant in the two-windowed shop of Mr. Peter Tomkins, draper and mercer, in Alexandra Square. Your tastes are literary, but circumstances, as usual, militate against your inclinations; and, whereas in your mind you aspire to be among the great or learned of this world, in your body—your actual self—you are that most infinitesimal and undignified of mortals—a counter-jumper.

"'She Stoops to Conquer!' Wonder what it is about," said our Erasmus to himself one evening when, having tidily put away all the cottons, and buttons, and tapes, and gloves, which he had disturbed in the course of the day, and having washed some of the hateful aroma of his business from off his hands and face, and shaken his features into staid solemnity before the glass in the common room of the establishment, he cast his eye down the catalogue of the Free Library.

"'Stoops to Conquer!' a fine title—in-spiriting, you know. Makes a fellow feel that he has in his bones some ambition to be something he is not. Could fancy myself Field-Marshal Meditation, or Archbishop Erasmus, with the greatest ease in the world. Yes. I will have 'She Stoops to Conquer,' and see what it is like. 'He stretches himself to win,' or 'He rises on his toes to reach,' would be more the thing for a man like me; but one must cut one's desires to one's opportunities, Erasmus, my boy, and one must put up with what our writing men and women provide for us, withal one has the feeling within one, that one could beat them all out and out in the matter of writing books, if only one did but try!"

"Yes, please, No. 9999 — Goldsmith Oliver, I think. No, is it? Yes, Oliver is the Christian name. He's called Goldsmith, though of course it might have been his trade, and not a name of his own at all. Ah! I see—it's a play."

Exit Erasmus Meditation, making much noise as to his feet, book under his arm, happy in the consciousness of coming pleasure.

"Yes, mamma, my toes are cramped. It's standing all day long behind that blessed counter. I've got a new book."

"Something instructive and devotional, Erasmus, my boy, I hope."

"Oh yes, mother. It's about stooping to conquer."

"Ay di me! We must all do it, my dear lad. We must bend our backs to the burden of life, bear the yoke without flinching, and then, when the last day comes, we shall be thankful. Yes, truly thankful. Read it to yourself, child. I am stimulated enough already."

"All right, mamma," from Erasmus, who secretly congratulates himself on the permission, since reading aloud to his mother is an ordeal like hot coals at the feet, with icebergs on the hands. Then, setting deep in his chair, he takes the prettiest of the kittens upon his lap, prepares his pencil, and opens the book No. 9999. His impression of the first page is unrecorded. He restrains his pencil for a whole page in Act I. But when Mr. Hardcastle says: "Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that—" And Mr. Hardcastle replies: "Let me see; twenty added to twenty makes just fifty-and-seven—" he were more than brute, and less than himself if he held his hand.

"Twenty and twenty are forty, not fifty-seven," he writes in the margin; and who shall contradict him?

But, once started, Erasmus knows not when or where to stop. He alters Mr. Hardcastle's "quotha" into "quoth he"! He charges Mrs. Hardcastle with using the word "paltry" in a wrong sense. He translates "solus" as "only." He agrees with Miss Hardcastle in her detestation of "a reserved lover," and explains, in a footnote, that "a reserved man is a man which . . . no, a man who reserves a part of himself within himself, and is a sham!!" Nevertheless—O illogical Erasmus!—he underlines, with two thick, black marks, Mr. Hardcastle's responsive assertion that "modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues," to

which he further affixes the seal of his entire approval in a "very true."

He is charmed with Tony's famous song in the "Three Pigeons," and underscores the first two lines:

Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain
With grammar, and nonsense, and learning,

with such strength of finger that we should have prophesied a bad end for him if he had carried his approval to the next line also, which he passes over in silence for the fourth, wherein the tempting word "genus," in italics, gives him opportunity of stating, as an aside, that "genus, generis" means a race. The "toroddle, toroddle, toroll," at the end of each verse is a killing mystery, if the quivering zigzag underneath it means anything.

But really, Erasmus, you are so exacting and devoid of imagination that we know not what to think of you. When you put three notes of interrogation opposite "ecod" we wonder what you mean. When you scrawl two perpendicular dashes alongside Tony's description of his half-sister as "a tall, trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole," and of himself as "a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth that everybody is fond of," we sympathise with you, and recognise your ideal.

Later, we draw conclusions that your modest mind, Erasmus, is satiated with the "devils" and "sounds" of the speakers. You are surprised at the need of such strong language. No wonder! You laugh, too, as you think how they would have sounded coming from you in slow, but honest, recitation to the ears of horror-stricken mamma.

And thus, when you come to Mr. Hardcastle's "O Lud! O Lud!" you make your final remark, and retire from the field of commentary. Our poor Erasmus! Hadst lost all patience with thy author, and his ill-sounding incomprehensibilities? Didst at length come to regard him as a reprobate on whom good black-lead pencil was wasted? Or, wert thou suddenly called away from the completion of thy instructive pleasure by some domestic necessity? or—woe to it!—some fell circumstance or accident that put a period to thy life? Hadst thou a fit when thy curious mind had writ itself out in the last exhaustive paraphrase? The cat—did it, perchance, go mad, and, biting thy mamma and thee, send ye both to an untimely grave? Was supper ready, and didst thou haply overeat thyself; or choke? Heaven save us, Erasmus! Would that

thou hadst ended the task undertaken in the spring of the evening, and not by this sullen close to thy young outpourings have left us in a turmoil of agitation for thy physical and intellectual security! But if thou art still among us, may thine end be peace.

Swearing! Yes, Erasmus, we would fain believe that this one word solves the riddle of our hopes and fears concerning thee. Thy mind, having lightly jumped the dangerous ditches of "devil" and "zoundz," comes full tilt upon a "Lud," and, with poetic prevision, thou knowest the peril with which thou art threatened.

"Shut the book, for evil communications corrupt good manners"—thus speaks the conscience of Erasmus, and he, being but a boy, dare not disobey its loud authoritative counsel.

"Very well," sighs Erasmus, "but before I put it away, let me express my opinion once again."

"Lud! Lud! Corruption of Lord—swearing." This done, he shuts the book with a bang, awaking mamma to the presence of supper, and the realities of a life which she was fast forgetting in the sweet confusion of naps and knitting.

Heaven be with thee, Erasmus, and keep thee always innocent—even by the rules of thine own exacting standard!

One more subject. In another novel—the title of which we are glad to forget—there occurs the phrase: "A sweet, fresh, young man," to which nauseous mass of adjectives upon one small noun, is affixed a feminine "Oh my!" That it is a feminine addition, who can doubt? Can you not hear her say it? see the expression on her face while she says it? fancy the flickering giggle upon her lips while she writes it in the book?

The words in print have a strange power over her. "A sweet, fresh, young man!" Why, may our head be forfeit if she felt not each adjective to the end of her toes, and a shock that might have been the superlative degree of the three adjectives together, when she came to the crowning word—man!

Ah, Miss Susceptible Sensitive, we know you. We would we could say we love you. But, candidly, we cannot. That "oh my!" of yours is such a plebeian, a basement, sort of exclamation, that we could not idealise you to the loving point, howsoever much we tried. True, we are willing to allow that ours is the misfortune.

You may be as pretty as a Greuze. We hope you are. But if you value your peace of mind in the future, Miss Susceptible, do strive, and strive early, to master your tongue. Don't, for the sake of all you hold dear, let it do as it pleases. Or, if you find that it is, thus early, too fatally independent to submit to discipline, lock yourself in a dark room for five hours or so a day, and give the tongue full fling, so that, on your release, it may be too tired to let loose any more such monstrosities of speech from pure exuberance of health and imagination.

A word in your ear, Miss Susceptible. Do you know that if, captivated by the sweetness or the beauty of your face, we had engaged ourself to you for life, and were on the very eve of joining you in church some bright June morning; if, at such a conjuncture, we were to hear you utter such a pair of words, we do declare and vow that we would cry off, and take our chance of an action for breach, so immense is our horror of such terrible slips of the tongue!

Heaven help us! We seem to see and hear a table full of cherubic little Susceptibles—our offspring, Susceptible, born ere we had knowledge of your one evil quality—we seem to see them in all the charms of innocence and grace; we distinguish ourself at one end of the table, and thee, O Susceptible, at the other, when lo! an evil spirit appears, a black shadow has fallen upon us; we are penetrated with woe; we seem grim and anguished, as through fear and disgust. Now, wherefore this sad change? why so sudden a transformation? Alas! it is due to this, and this only. The tiny seed of vulgarity admitted into the brain of their mamma at some horrible moment, has brought forth its fruit.

The maternal "oh, my!" has descended to a young generation. Thine own odious words, O Susceptible, have found expression in thy posterity, and ours. "Oh my! oh my!" Mercy, we cry; and lo! the vision has passed.

There are in life rare, but certain, moments of bitterness and horror so intense that a repetition of them is death. Read, therefore, and ponder our words, Susceptible, and, if you love our esteem and that of all your respectable acquaintances, for the future forswear "oh my!"

Our picture gallery were an endless one, did we humour ourself. But we prefer

not to extend the pleasure of a brief chat with our subjects until, by lingering over the scrawled and well-thumbed books, we be attacked by distaste and nausea, and disposed by our altered mood to be hypercritical rather than tender and just towards these, the lowly, but not contemptible, critics of our writers.

A FAMOUS POTTERY.

TIME out of mind there have been potters at Lambeth. At first, perhaps, they were attracted to the place by some vein of clay which was suitable for their craft. But if such a vein ever existed, it has long ago been worked out.

For the Dutch potters, who settled in Lambeth early in the eighteenth century, the advantages of the site were its loneliness and almost waste condition, sparsely inhabited with people inured to the fumes of potters' kilns, with its nearness to the city, and its facilities in the way of water-carriage. The Dutchmen made Delft ware as well as salt-glazed stoneware. The manufacture of Delft ware gradually dwindled away, and the products of Lambeth became more and more utilitarian and unartistic as time went on.

The earliest of what we may term modern potters' firms, actually existing or represented by direct successors, were the Stiffs, who established a pottery, in 1751, on the site of the old residence of the Bishops of Hereford.

In 1769, according to Nichols, "a burnt artificial stone factory" was established by Mrs. Coode, at Lambeth. The burnt stone was a kind of terra-cotta, in which the Coodes at a later period produced works of artistic merit, such as bassi relievi, of which there is an example at Greenwich Hospital, and statues such as that of Nelson upon the Nelson monument at Great Yarmouth.

The Pottery to which we propose to pay a visit, that of Doulton and Co., was founded in 1815, by John Doulton and J. Watts, at Vauxhall Walk, and was removed to its present site—of which it then occupied but a small corner—in 1834, to the High Street, Lambeth, that is, which was once known as Back Lane; the river in those days being considered the chief highway of Lambeth, when the cry was "first oars to Lambeth," instead of calling a cab from the stand, or taking a place in railway or tram.

Stoneware was from the beginning the chief product of the Lambeth pottery, and was of chiefly a utilitarian character—chemical vessels and household requisites, with stone bottles and jugs. In these last-named vessels some attempt was made at artistic decoration. The "old brown jug," of Toby Tossopot character, was indigenous to Lambeth, and other jugs and bottles were produced bearing the portraits of well-known characters of their times—Wellington, the Sailor Prince, and heroes of the Reform Bill agitation. The solid success attained by the firm in its stoneware pipes and vessels of strictly useful purposes, gave the opportunity for development in another direction. The production of terra-cotta for architectural embellishments, as well as for vases of various kinds, gave an artistic direction to the efforts of the Lambeth potters. Some of the first results of this may be seen by any passenger by the South Western Railway between Waterloo and Vauxhall, where one of the monumental factories of the firm will be noticed decorated with medallion heads in terra-cotta, representing the great potters of the past, and, ideally, the cities and states where the art has most especially flourished. This building dates from the year 1866, and from that time date the earnest efforts in the direction of artistic workmanship and design, which first came under general observation at the International Exhibition of 1871, and from that time the Lambeth pottery has borne a conspicuous share in what may be called the Renaissance of English pottery.

In one respect this Renaissance forms a new departure altogether. Hitherto the craft had been mostly confined to masculine hands. We all know what Madame Palissy thought of her husband's experiments in enamelled ware, how she cried ruin and havoc as her household goods gradually disappeared to feed her husband's furnaces. And in our old Staffordshire potteries the rôle of women was to fill the crates, and load the donkey, and drive the same to market. And the artists of the famous English potteries of the eighteenth century were all of the rougher sex. We read of "a nursery" at Chelsea of about thirty lads, who were learning the arts of "potting and painting."

But it was reserved for our own age to exploit the deftness and lightness of touch of feminine hands in the service of artistic decoration. And in this connection, with reference to ornamental pottery, we may

quote an account of the Doulton Potteries published by the firm.

"The year 1873 was, perhaps, the most eventful in determining the future of this interesting manufacture. Its first days saw the definite introduction of female employment as the mainstay of the decorative work, while the later months brought about the commencement of an entirely new branch, such as had never before found footing in Lambeth, namely, the under-glaze painting of Faience. Mr. W. T. Rix, who took special interest in organising the ladies' and girls' department, has since had the superintendence of the art pottery work. During the year a small band of young girls had been carefully trained in the handicraft of stoneware decoration, while some twelve or fourteen lady artists were industriously instructed in Faience painting work."

With this much introduction to the subject, we may begin our visit to the Doulton Potteries: first taking a glance at the objects of pure utility—drain-pipes, conduits, sinks, and sanitary ware of all kinds, many of which are moulded by machinery and turned out in quantities quite astonishing. Other matters there are in which ornament is combined with utility, as in stoneware grates, and hearths, and chimney-pieces, sometimes plain and severe, and sometimes highly decorated with plaques, figures, and medallions. Then there are fittings for lavatories, bath-rooms, and other household purposes; for this clean and brilliant stoneware can be moulded into almost any form, and seems destined to supersede metal castings and fittings, as well as stone and marble ornaments, in the filling up and decoration of houses, clubs, manufactories, and other buildings.

But these things are chiefly of technical interest, and wonder is more strongly excited when we come in view of the amazing variety of decorated pottery, with all its richness and sumptuousness of form and colouring, wonder as to the processes and methods of the art by which all these charming effects are produced.

The artistic branches of the Doulton Potteries are housed in a large building apart from the general works; a building of many floors with many corridors and passages, with lifts shut in and working without noise; there are telephones on every floor, and electric bells tinkle softly now and then; but generally a pleasant stillness reigns throughout the place. Each

one of these doors bears on a white plaque a lady's name—the lady at the head of the studio. And when the door opens, a long well-lighted room is revealed with tables sprinkled with tools, and brushes, and palettes, and sitting or standing, a number of girls, each endued with the ample white apron of her craft, and each at work upon some vase or other work of art, placed opposite on its revolving pedestal—a vase still soft from the potter's wheel. Some of the processes of decoration are more or less mechanical, a richly decorated surface is produced by pressing fragments of fine old point lace upon the moistened clay, dies or seals charged with various-coloured clays are impressed upon the vase, coloured slips moulded in perforated plates of metal are used as ornaments, or designs are transferred to the clay by a kind of stencilling process. Or perhaps gold is applied with a stamp, or a line is incised here and there, and filled up with colour.

But all these processes require a firmness and delicacy of touch, an assured and a skilful handling which is the result both of training and of natural aptitude. All these processes go, perhaps, to make a vase of which many exemplars will be produced, and which will be, with all its richness of ornament, within the reach of people of moderate means.

But there are other and smaller studios, occupied, perhaps, by two or three artists only, where work is going on which is destined to be unique. Here, on the moist clay, a young lady is, with rapid touches, designing some trailing plant, or some flower of graceful form and brilliant colouring; while another, with pointed tool, is incising the outlines of some flowing ornament, or perhaps it is a landscape centre-piece which is growing under the brush of the rapid and skilful artist.

One of the pleasantest studios in the building is that occupied by a lady who has long been distinguished by her skill in designing and modelling animal forms, and whose etched outlines of horses, cattle, and animals in general, have given individual value to so much of the original "Doulton ware." Here we see a charming little group of white and black-faced sheep, protected by the swelling curves of a quaintly-shaped vase, while on the other side is an equally delightful sheep-dog, with "his honest, sonsie, bousn't face"—a vase whose future possessor is to be envied for his good fortune.

But, whatever may have been the character of the vessel of clay, whether vase or centre-piece, panel or plaque, to one complexion must it come at last—the kiln, that is, or firing process; and of the regions where all this is carried on we obtain an unexpected glimpse.

At the end of a long corridor we come to an iron panel, and this, suddenly thrown up, reveals a vast, indefinite space beyond, penetrated with a greyish glow that is rather gloom than light, with groups of men in rough working-dress scattered about, and a clayey feeling everywhere, while, rising from basement to roof, are what seem to be huge rude pillars of white calcined bricks, which are actually so many kilns awaiting their weekly charge.

This is the after-world of the creations of the potter's art—or, rather, it is the scene of their fiery trial, from which they will return endowed with a species of immortality. Indeed, there is nothing perhaps, among all man's works, so indestructible as well-baked pottery.

Ages hence, when the site of Lambeth, or perhaps even of London, shall have become unknown, some of these vases may survive, treasured in the museums of a future race, to whom there may be little other evidence of our ever having existed.

When the cavern of the fiery furnaces is once more shut out from view, we may return to the happier regions of the ateliers and studios. There are some fifty of these in the building, affording space for about four hundred workers. Then there is a spacious dining-room, with long tables laid out in readiness for the midday meal. Here the young ladies will presently dine together; and we may imagine that the earnest stillness of the studio will be succeeded by a good deal of talk, laughter, and general rattle.

There is a refreshment bar, too, where those who prefer a lighter repast in the quietude of their own rooms may obtain anything they require. In the evening tea is served, and from this meal those who choose can join the evening classes at the School of Art. For there is an excellent School of Art in Lambeth, which furnishes from among its students many recruits to the work-rooms of the Lambeth potteries. There is also a lecture-room, where papers are read treating of the ceramic arts; and a museum of pottery—small, but wide and complete in its range; and a small reference library, embracing the most costly and elaborate illustrated works on

the subject of ancient and modern pottery.

While the ornamentation of pottery is almost entirely done by female hands—in the plastic arts the masculine element re-asserts itself. And here we come to studios devoted to works in terra-cotta, in which of late years wonderful progress has been made, owing in great measure to the efforts of the Lambeth artists and workmen.

The Doulton Potteries began to produce works in terra-cotta as early as the year 1855, chiefly in the way of garden vases, pedestals, garden seats, and the like. Then followed the manufacture of architectural decorations in terra-cotta, and the production of plaques and medallions. The generally received idea of terra-cotta is that it must necessarily be of that deep reddish-brown colour, and, indeed, "terra-cotta" figures as something of the kind in the dressmaker's list of colours, as applied to female costumes. But terra-cotta may be also of a light-buff colour, or of any shade between; and these lighter shades of the material lend themselves very effectively to those works of more elevated purpose, in which the human form is modelled in high relief, or even to groups of figures, which may more properly be described as statuary.

The most distinguished worker in this branch of art is Mr. George Tinworth, whose works, all produced at the Doulton Pottery, are now well known through the length and breadth of the land.

It is a privilege, as well as a pleasure of a high order, to be introduced to Mr. Tinworth's studio at the pottery, where he may be found enveloped in his long, white workman's blouse. A sturdy, unpretending figure, with aquiline profile, and face well shrouded with brown beard and moustache, and with the nervous, plastic hands of a born sculptor. Here he stands, surrounded with his works in various states of progress, from the earliest sketch to the completed and recently-fired group. Mr. Tinworth's subjects are, as is well known, chiefly of a religious character, and drawn from Biblical incidents. He has recently completed a monumental work, of which the subject is, "Christ before Herod," the figures life-size, and the whole marked with the verve and dramatic power characteristic of the artist.

It may be questioned whether any real artist has himself much satisfaction in his own choice works. He always doubts

whether he has thoroughly realised his own conceptions; he remembers, too, the labour and sorrow they cost him before they were produced to the world. And thus we fancy that it is with something like a sigh of relief that the artist turns from his higher works and brings to light a delightful little work in terra-cotta, no bigger than a pint pot, which is a representation of a Punch-and-Judy show, in which artistes and spectators are so many mice, while one little gamin, in the way of a mouse, is trying to peer behind, or rather within, the scenes, to see how the whole thing is done. And now we can quite realise that George Tinworth is of the same race as William Hogarth and George Cruikshank, and has a strong sense of humour underlying his other gifts.

Higher still we mount, and find gentlemen artists at work painting figures on panels, which are presently to go to the oven: or otherwise occupied with brush and pallet. Others are modelling in clay the details of a grand fountain that is going to Glasgow presently. The separate parts, of which the fountain will eventually be built up, are of a size to astonish one. Here is an elaborate portion just completed, which is far too big for any of the ordinary lifts, and a group of men are busy about it, and are making ready to lower it down in primitive fashion, with ropes and pulleys, through a huge trap-door. It is an anxious moment when the load swings clear, for it is all built up, with its elaborate curves and mouldings, of soft clay. At the last moment, a workman whips off his cap and applies it to a part where a rope threatens to fret the mould. There is a kind of self-sacrifice about the act that suggests the mediæval workman, anxious, above all things, for the success of his work. Indeed, a good deal of that mediæval spirit seems to pervade the whole establishment.

And now we must leave the pleasant region of art to wander into that undiscovered region of which we had a glimpse just now—the region of dim distances encompassed by furnaces and kilns. At the very outset, however, we are brought into the throwers' shed, and within the scope of the fascinations of the potter's wheel. There is no such wonderful sight anywhere to be seen as the growth of a lump of clay on the potter's wheel, under the hand of the potter, into shapes of grace and delicacy, such as no other craft can rival. And when, as in this case, the

potter is one of the most skilful of his craft, the beautiful forms that rise under his hand seem like the result of a magic power. And in one "tour de force"—where the potter, by a turn of his finger, spreads out the lip of the vase into a circle of overlapping leaves—the result is more surprising than if it had been effected by a fairy wand.

Then there is the lathe room, where the still unbaked vase is placed in a lathe, and its surface receives a high polish, or where circular lines are run round it.

Further on, rougher work is in progress—the moulding of clay into vessels and appliances of commerce—and then we are introduced to the kilns themselves. These are now described as cool; but the air within them is of tropical sultriness; great cylindrical chambers, one above the other, communicating by a domed opening in the centre, and these chambers are being rapidly packed with objects of every possible shape and size. Rows of vases repose in their niches as if in some sepulchral chamber; stacks of pipes and slabs occupy the centre; the great section of the fountain we saw lowered down just now is already reposing safely in the kiln.

The chamber below will be white heat, this one only red heat, explains our guide; and so the great oven is filled up, and by-and-by the batch will be complete and the kiln built up, and the great furnace will roar, and then the whole contents will pass by degrees from perishable clay to the brightness, and strength, and purity of true pottery.

CURLY'S LAST RIDE.

THERE were rocks ahead—there was no doubt of that. For weeks we had heard whispers of an Indian rising, and now the Redskins had us hemmed in on every side. The white settlers had long ago left the territory, and we were holding the fort in utter desperation. Dear old fort, what happy days we had spent in it! How brave and bright the hearts that beat there! It was picturesquely rough. The winding river could be seen a mile away, gliding and quivering through the trees like a huge serpent. The air was laden with the scent of the pine bloom, and the prairie round was soft as velvet. The high stockade that ran round the barracks made the position all but impregnable, and we kept the old flag floating over it to the last.

But the day came when we had to leave it, flying for our lives. We were only a handful of men from the beginning. The Captain had been murdered by the red devils three weeks before, when parleying with one of the Chiefs, and Bruce, his orderly, galloped back with an arrow in his lungs, and died two days after. Scottie and Ford succumbed to typhoid fever and were buried behind the stables, and only six of the boys were left, besides myself, to see the end of it.

I was in charge after the Captain's death, and when I saw them drag his mutilated body past the fort, I felt sorely tempted to trust to luck and make one good old-fashioned charge at the dusky scoundrels. But I had great responsibility upon my shoulders then, and as I was only a non-commissioned officer, I did not care to be too rash, or to fool away my comrades' lives unnecessarily. A prairie trooper is not just the most refined character going; he does not move much in polished society, nor does he see many new faces; but he loves his comrades all the more for that, and I knew that there was not a man amongst us that would not die for the other if it came to a pinch.

So we kept on our weary watch, waiting for the help that was never to come.

Dear old chums, how brave and patient they were! If I had been a general they could not have obeyed me better. I wonder if an odder squad of men were ever shaken together? Here was old Peter, the veteran, always talking of the "precarious times," but as game as a pebble in spite of his frosted head; and Frenchy, so called from the long goatee he insisted upon sporting as often as he could find an officer good-natured enough to tolerate it; there was the Parson, nicknamed on account of his never-ceasing profanity, but who was as tender-hearted as a woman; Ananias, always telling the most impossible yarns, and invariably ending with the solemn asseveration, "this is a true story"; Fatty, ever on the look-out for a meal; and, last of all, there was dear old handsome Carly—every one who knew him loved him. His voice was the loudest and his laugh the merriest everywhere. His heart was as big as a house, and he always had a smile and a kindly word for every poor wretch that ever needed one. He was a reckless dog, and oftener in scrapes than any man in the command; he received his reprimands and punishments in due course, and when they were over was again

as bad as ever. The men adored him, and the officers thought nothing that was done was good enough or bad enough unless Carly had a hand in it too. How he used to laugh when an Indian came within range, and how incessantly he used to pop at him "just for fun"!

It was all hard enough work while it lasted, though we never knew from one moment to another when the enemy might storm us, and the horses were kept saddled day and night in case of a surprise.

We had to keep our eyes skinned, you can bet on that. The Indians were round us not a hundred yards away, and seemed to divine how scarce our provisions and ammunition were.

For a week or two we had peppered them gaily; but it soon became too expensive an amusement, and we had to husband every cartridge we could count against the day when might mean men's lives. Right up to the hills behind, right on to the river in front, they lay in wait for us; and the curling smoke from their teepees fires told us in what swarms they mustered.

Escape seemed quite impossible. The stores were all but finished, and half-rations was the order of the day for man and beast. The horses had the worst of it, I think; deprived of exercise, and stinted of their food, their legs began to swell, and the want of water made their coats rough and staring, and their tempers vicious and uncertain.

Things went on like this for more than a month, and, at last, we had not more than three days' provisions left amongst us. The well had dried up completely, too, owing to the awful drought, and the men were beginning to be wild and desperate.

I had just dropped asleep one morning after a long nightwatch, when Frenchy woke me to say that a fresh detachment of Indians had crossed the river on a raft which was moored close to the horses' old watering-ground. This he had distinctly seen from the look-out tower on the old hospital roof, and he further added the alarming information that the new-comers had their "feathers" on, and were dancing to the beat of the tom-tom.

This was as bad as could be, for the feathered heads and muffled beating betokened speedy bloodshed. I was up in a moment, and every loophole in the corral was stopped as fast as willing hands could do it. The horses were led into the square, and the little squad armed to the teeth, gathered together, prepared

to defend their lives as only desperate men know how to do.

We had not long to wait. We saw the mob in front of us grow larger, and heard the guttural yells that greeted the Big Chief's speech, and then they came towards us in a solid mass. Forty yards away they stopped, and, forming a circle round the barracks, fired volley after volley at us, but their bullets stuck harmlessly in the palisades, or flew high above our heads.

Occasionally they would fire arrows in the air to which were attached burning rags, with the evident intention of setting fire to our buildings.

For many hours this went on, the Redskins knowing that they had us completely trapped, whilst we dared not waste our ammunition by the discharge of a single shot. At last they succeeded in firing the stables, and the old wood burned like tinder.

Fatty and Frenchy got up to the roof at once to try and save the place, but hardly had they shown themselves when there was a deafening gun-fire, and Fatty fell dead at our feet, shot through the head.

We were determined that the Indians should not get his body to mutilate and disfigure, so we laid it in the thickest of the roaring fire to burn. There was no time then for leave-taking, nor signs of sorrow, and what we had to do had to be done quickly.

From the stables, the fire spread to the hospital, and we were getting scorched with the awful heat, while the horses were becoming unmanageable through fright and excitement.

The moment had come for action and could not be delayed. "Boys," I said, as I looked into the faces of the little group about me, "we've stuck to this old outfit long enough. We haven't another meal to eat, nor a drop of water for the horses, and the place is on fire all round us. We needn't expect any mercy from these howling devils, and I'm not for asking it either. But we must get away from here mighty quickly that's certain, so I propose to make a dash for the river and the raft; if we can reach it safely we may save our skins, and if not, we may as well be killed out there as burned like rats in here." To this there was a general assent, and that is how the sortie was arranged.

It takes a long time to tell, doesn't it? But it wasn't long of happening, I can tell you.

The horses' girths were overhauled and

tightened, and each man slung his rifle on his back. Revolvers in right hand, and sabres in left, we prepared to mount, with the understanding that we were to keep together pace for pace, straight out into the open for half-a-mile, and then strike to the left for the river.

One moment for a silent, rapid hand-shake, and we were all in the saddle but Curly, who stood at the gates to open them. I held his horse and saw him jump into his place, almost before the rusty hinges had ceased to creak.

The Indians saw our movement and headed for us immediately; but we were too quick for them and charged smash into them, riding down the nearest and shooting and sabring right and left.

How distinctly I remember in the next few seconds the crimson blood, the thunder of the horses' hoofs, the moans and cries, and the deep laboured breathing as the heavy sabres rose and fell.

The firing, unfortunately, was a signal to the Indians near the river-bank that we were moving, and we could see the gleam of their rifle-barrels as they ran towards us. There must have been three hundred of them round about us, and we were only six. I don't know how the other fellows felt, but all my nerves seemed strung like wires as we galloped along. Here was a sense of glorious, mad intoxication, that overcame all other feeling.

How the horses ran, half-plunging, half in air, and how the lead hail whizzed on every side of us! We got well into the open, and "left wheel" I shouted, and then we were making straight for the river.

A rattling volley from a little thicket we were nearing passed right amongst us, and I saw Curly's right arm fall limp and helpless by his side. The bright cheeks blanched, but he never uttered a sound, and I saw him let his pistol fall and put his sword between his teeth as he tore along.

The Parson was swearing at the top of his voice, and slashing like a butcher as he stood high in his stirrups, and we went on neck and neck, like a rolling wave. We were within half-a-mile of the water now, and the spurs were jamming hard and fast.

Oh, if we could only make it!

Another volley, and Curly fell forward on his saddle, but was up again in a moment, ghastly white, and with the blood pouring in torrents from his mouth. He staggered, and swayed, but shook his brave head and smiled, as if to say he was with us still.

"Hold on, Curly!" I cried. "Sit steady, man—for Heaven's sake, sit steady! we are almost there."

In another moment we were at the raft, Ananias was cutting at the ropes, and I had Curly in my arms, whilst the others covered us against the yelling mob now fast overtaking us. The horses fled madly off as soon as we dismounted, and we could see the braves pursuing them already far away.

The rest is quickly told. We got afloat, and dropped smartly down the stream, lying flat on our faces to lessen the danger of being hit by the shots the enemy kept dropping at us.

For hours they followed us down the bank; and every now and then, when the river narrowed, and brought us too close to them, we would give them a dose, dropping the nearest, and scattering the rest. But when the evening came, and the sun went down, we saw the last of them, and knew that we were safe.

Not a man was hurt but Curly. Why was it that he alone—the bravest and the best—should have been singled out for such a death? His arm was shattered, and a bullet had gone in at his back between the shoulders. He was in agony, and we had not a comfort to offer him. We laid our tunics on the rough log-knots, to make it softer for him, and the Parson pulled his shirt and socks off to make a pillow for him. Frenchy tore his shirt into strips for bandages, and old Peter used his to cover up the poor cold feet.

Yes, Curly was dying. He groaned with pain, but he never complained; and, although he could hardly speak, he smiled at us to thank us for what we tried to do for him. There were few words spoken as we drifted on, and, when the great moon rose in a blaze of silver light, she looked down on one hard sight that night: a little log raft dancing on the water, and on it six weary men, blood-stained, half-naked, dust-begrimed, and one of them with glazing eyes fast travelling to the farther shore from which no man returns.

Just before midnight Curly spoke.

"Good-bye," he said; and the boys knelt round him in a group, and took his hands. The tears were trickling down their faces, who would themselves have died without a tremble. "I'm going, boys; good-bye." And then he put his hand up to his neck and showed the little chain he always wore, and which we used to call his dog-collar. "Give it to her by-and-by,"

he whispered. "Dear little Jeanie," and then he fell back exhausted. He was so white and still we thought him dead; but soon he spoke again. "How dark it is! Well done, Parson. Jeanie, come back to me! Steady there. Dear little woman——"

And Curly's life went out for ever.

When the stars gave way to the rose tints of the early dawn, we landed in a little pine-wood. With swords and hands we dug a grave and placed him tenderly in it, kissing his dead cold face. The Parson's shirt was still his pillow, and Peter's red tunic his winding sheet. His sword, and rifle, and spurs were laid beside him; and dear old Curly was left alone.

Who Jeanie was, we never knew; but the heart that loved her was as true as steel.

Did you ever care for him, oh well-loved Jeanie? or was he less than nothing to you? Are you hoping still to hear his laugh and feel his strong arms round you? or have you long since ceased to think of him?

No monument is standing to tell his worth, no prayer was chanted over his mossy grave; but the pine-trees wave all round it, and the song-birds sing above it; and Curly—dear old Curly the lion-hearted, the best and truest of men—sleeps in it alone the sleep that knows no waking.

WEST AFRICAN "CUSTOMS."

ROME was in her death-struggle with Hannibal, whose brother, Hasdrubal, had brought a new army across the Alps, and was marching southward. Should he reach the Tiber, there would be no hope for the Eternal City. What were the gods about? To jog their memories, they were all cleaned, newly dressed, laid on ornamented couches (pulvinaria), and solemnly carried round; their temples, meanwhile, being purified of the smoke and other filth which was sure to gather wherever burnt sacrifices were frequent.

But this and a host of other little ceremonies were felt to be not enough; the present crisis in Rome called for something more. A few generations earlier the Consuls would probably have drawn lots to see which was doomed by the infernal gods, and he on whom the lot fell would have drawn his mantle over his head, spurred his horse upon the Carthaginian lines, and, dying, have dragged to death

along with himself the forces of the enemy. Now Consul Nero, instead of sacrificing himself, showed himself such a master of tactics that he annihilated Hasdrubal's army at the Metaurus, Hannibal's first news of the defeat being his brother's head, which the conqueror bowled into his tent. But though the educated Romans were, by that time, some way gone in scepticism, the people were as superstitious as ever; and, while the fate of Rome hung in the balance, the Senate went back to the "great customs" of early days, and solemnly buried alive in the forum a Gallic man and woman, and a Greek man and woman.

No doubt hundreds of Romans thought that the grand success at the Metaurus was due not to Nero's ability, but to this satisfaction offered to the grim powers of darkness. It was a "survival," of which the more enlightened were ashamed; for the Romans had passed beyond the stage of human sacrifices. They had even taken upon themselves to admonish others. One of the terms of the treaty at the end of the first Carthaginian war was: "You shall no more pass your children through the fire to Melcarth (Moloch of Carthage)";* but fear is an ill-counsellor; and now the old dread of blood-loving powers in the background of everyday belief was cropping up among "among the masses." "Oh, but our Teutonic forefathers never did these dreadful things. They came natural to Greeks and Romans, who, half-Canaanites, were steeped in all the abominations for which the Lord destroyed those nations. We are pure-blood Teutons and Scandinavians, quite uncontaminated by those disgusting brutes, the Britons, than whom a more despicable set of savages never disgraced the earth."

That is what a good many fools, exaggerating Mr. Freeman's paradox, are ready to cry out. It is the sort of cry we may expect from those who swallow Mr. Hodggett's "Greater England;" but is it true? Why, Tacitus—who held a brief for the Germans, glorifying them by way of contrast with his countrymen, going in for "the noble savage," as Rousseau did eighteen centuries later, and for much the same reasons—Tacitus tells of human sacrifices among "our Teutonic forefathers." Even the shrine of the great Earth-goddess in the sacred isle of Rugen was blood-

stained, and the temple servants who cleansed her car after the yearly festival were drowned that they might tell no tales. In our own isles, whenever—as in Sligo and Glamorgan—a cairn has been opened, and grouped round the chief have been found skeletons of his servants killed at his funeral, the grave is probably that of some Norseman.

"The Celt" had his faults; we must not believe Cæsar; the latest, and probably the true view of the Commentaries is that the manners and customs parts are as truthful as the natural history—the elks with jointless legs, etc.—and that both were made up from traders' tales.

But even Cæsar never accuses Gauls or Britons of killing wives or slaves at a Chief's grave. He does say that the former burned, in times of public danger, huge wicker idols full of human beings; and I can remember that, in my school history, the same thing was said of the Britons, and a picture showed the victims trying to wriggle out, and a Druid pushing them back with his staff.

But even if this is a true bill against the forefathers of three-fifths of us, they had passed beyond the other stage of marking a Chief's death by a "great custom;" while the Norsemen had not kept up the practice, indeed, long after every race in Europe, except themselves, had become Christians. There is a difference in the two usages: the former, however horrible, is done for patriotism; the latter is personal and selfish. It is in West Africa that the personal "customs" still survive in all their horror. With the destruction of the old Mexican Empire, the other kind of "custom"—the patriotic—has wholly passed away. Thousands were killed on those flat-topped pyramids, like that at Cholula; but it was for the nation's good, not to make the individual more comfortable in the after-world. Hundreds are killed at Coomassie, whenever any of the blood-royal dies, solely that the Prince or Princess may not want attendants.

Again and again an English trader or traveller has had to look on at these "customs;" but the horrors were never fully described till 1873, when the German missionaries, Bounat, Kühne, and Ramseyer were prisoners in the town at the time of the Crown Prince's death. As soon as he was seen to be dying, the executioners began to scour the streets for victims. When they caught anyone, two of them would come behind and each thrust a knife

* Gelo, Prince of Syracuse, the Sicilian Greek, had tried to enforce the same thing long before.

through the cheeks, the blades passing over the tongue, and a handle sticking out on each side. This is to prevent the poor creature from "swearing on the life of the King,"—i.e., swearing that if he dies, the King must die too—in which case, instead of being killed, he would not only be spared, but ranked among the "okra," courtiers whose life depends on that of the King, and who—killed when he dies—hold till his death places of trust and honour.

Besides those thus caught, every great Chief had to offer a victim; but the number was chiefly made up of slaves and prisoners of war. The wives—painted white, and covered with gold ornaments—sat round the coffin, flapping off the flies. They were strangled at the funeral. So were six pages, who, similarly painted and adorned, sat by the dead man. They had known their fate some days before; but none ran away, save three wives of low birth, whose place was at once supplied by other girls. For nine days the slaughter went on, the people fasting, with shaven heads and bodies painted red, but drinking all the more. And this death-wake was to be repeated forty days after.

When a King dies, the victims are slain at the rate of two hundred a week for three months. But there have been "greater customs" than these. A King's mother died in 1816; her son slaughtered three thousand people, two thousand being prisoners just captured from the Fantis. To make up the tale, every big Ashantee town had to give one hundred, every smaller town ten victims.

A royal burial is on this wise: At the bottom of a huge grave are laid the heads of the slain; on them the coffin rests. Then, just before the earth is thrown in, one of the bystanders—a freeman, if of some rank so much the better—is suddenly clubbed, a gash made in the back of his neck, and he is rolled in upon the coffin. The idea is to send along with the crowd of slaves and prisoners someone who shall look after them as a ghostly "major domo."

For a King there remains yet another "custom." At the end of thirty moons the grave is opened, the royal bones fastened together with gold wire, and the skeleton placed in a long building divided into cells, the doorways to which are hung with silk curtains.

Then on his birthday the King of Ashantee goes early to the house of the royal dead. Every skeleton is taken from its richly ornamented coffin where it has lain sur-

rounded by the things that had been most pleasing to it in life, and is placed on a chair to welcome the visitor. As the King enters each cell with a meat and drink offering to the departed, the band plays the favourite melodies of that particular King, and, unawares, the royal visitor signs to the executioners who have followed him, and an attendant is pierced through the cheeks and killed, the King washing the skeleton in the warm blood. The same work goes on at the next cell, and so on, the fearful work going on far into the night. The band plays a signal as each victim is slaughtered. Two blasts of the horn mean "death, death;" three drum taps, "cut it off;" one beat from a big drum, "the head has fallen." The signal is taken up by other bands, and all through the city horn-blowing and drum-beating goes on unceasingly. The Ashantees always say of a drum, "it speaks;" and every traveller admits that they manage to elicit from that unmanageable instrument a most varied range of sound. The sounds form words, the whole rhythm a sentence, readily understood by native listeners. Each chief has his own "call," just as each Highland clan had its own battle-tune. Of course this constant killing makes the people callous to suffering and brutal to their prisoners. Their feeling in regard to death is not courage but apathy. The spectators are as delighted at these revolting "customs" as the Roman populace was at the gladiators' shows. Now and then a victim is tortured. The missionaries watched one who, besides the knives thrust into his back. He was then dragged before the King, gashed all over the body, his arms cut off, and in this plight compelled to dance for the amusement of the royal savage.

All the Ashantee human sacrifices, however, are not personal. When war is impending a victim is pegged down to the ground in the shape of an x, stakes being driven through the body, and the poor wretch being left to die on the war-path by which the invaders will have to travel. No native army would pass such an obstacle; it would turn back and cut a fresh way through the forest; and when, in 1874, we passed on unheeding over a body so pegged down along the road across the Adansi Hills, the priests came out and assured our men that they were doomed to certain destruction. If, after that Ashantee war, we had insisted

on the "customs" being given up, we should have only been doing our duty as human beings, not to say Christians. It is astonishing how the civilised world, which professes to have the welfare of the dark continent so much at heart, can allow this savagery to go on unchecked; and how we, who spend so much in capturing slaves on the East coast, most of whose cargoes are taken over to Bombay and become infinitely more wretched and degraded than they would have done as slaves to Turkish or Egyptian masters, can allow such abominations not very far off from Cape Coast Castle.

But everything in this world has a reason, and an Ashantee man could readily justify the "customs" by an appeal to that belief in the after life which he shares with us.

Is the Ashantee a fetish worshipper? That depends on what you mean by fetish. Major A. B. Ellis, who lived many years on the West Coast, holds that fetish worship—that is, the belief that a lump of red clay, or a bunch of rags, is in itself a deity—is unknown on the Gold Coast. Such a confusion of the tangible and the intangible, he thinks, is found in the South of Europe, where Italian fishermen will beat their images if their prayers are not answered, and Spaniards will cover theirs with a cloth when they are going to do something of which the saints might not approve.

But the Ashantee, he says, always distinguishes between the god and the object in which he temporarily resides. This may be a stone kept in a brass pan; but, when the god speaks to his worshippers he leaves the stone and enters into the priest, who shams convulsions, and begins to speak with a strange voice. Fetish, then, is the degradation—thinks Major Ellis—of a higher worship than that of the West African negroes; and the word, as he derives it, favours this idea. It is "feteico," the Portuguese for amulet, used of rosaries, relics—what we call "charms"—the maker of such things being a "feteicero."

When the Portuguese found the West Africans commonly reverencing stones, cones of earth, wooden dolls, they at once called these "feteicos," not noticing that it was the in-dwelling god, and not the tangible thing, that was the object of worship. The Ashantee believes that everything has a soul; when he offers a dish of rice to a god he is not troubled because his rice remains where he placed it; the soul of the

rice has been eaten, and that, for spiritual purposes, suffices.

Human beings have two souls; one, the shadow of the body, which, after death, goes to the world of shadows,* there to live a life precisely like that which the man lived here; the other, a something corresponding exactly with the "genius" of the Romans, a guardian spirit needing—as the "genius" did—to be propitiated with sacrifice, and after the man's death either staying in the house where he died, to vex the inmates with sickness or misfortune, or else entering into another body. During life this "genius" (kra) generally wanders away at night; and dreams are the adventures which befall him.

Sometimes, when the man is thus left unguarded, the "genius" of one lately dead enters into him, causing sickness, and needing to be exorcised. These "kras" have a land of their own, "far beyond the river;" but they only go there when driven by the spells of the priests, preferring, when the bodies they tenanted are dead, to wander about to do mischief. In the hope of averting this, the Ashantee shaves the head of his dead, and hangs a bundle of the hair from the roof of a miniature hut. The hair attracts the dead man's "kra;" it enters and, once in, it is persuaded to stay by meat and drink offerings, thus freeing the real hut from its presence.

Now, the "genius" counts for nothing in the "great customs;" the King never thinks of the mischief he may do by letting loose on the world at once such a number of "kras." His only thought is to secure spirit wives, spirit servants, spirit courtiers for his departed relative. He kills on the same principle on which he puts meat and drink, pipes and tobacco, gold ornaments, cloth, etc., in the grave. All these things have souls, and it is the shadowy part which follows the man's soul to the land of shadows.

Our forefathers seem to have had a somewhat similar double belief, not indeed in soul and "kra," but in soul and ghost. We hold that the man's soul goes its way at death; but many still fancy that his ghost—answering to the "kra," turned, i.e., into a malignant genius—hangs about almost invariably to annoy or to terrify the survivors.

* The after-world is a very poor, unsatisfactory counterpart of the world we live in. A proverb says, "A corner here is better than the whole of spirit land." So Achilles would rather be a day-labourer on Earth than a King in Hades.

On the part which dreams have played in furnishing us with ideas of the after-world, see Herbert Spencer's "Principles of Sociology," p. 148; they certainly account for "the unseen being conceived by most races as the counterpart of what we now see;" and, horrible though the "great customs" are, they are but the logical outcome of this belief. In shadowland, the Chief is still a Chief, and must be attended according to his quality. The same with the King: while living he is despot over tens of thousands; what more natural than that a few hundreds should be despatched along with him to give him due worship in the after-world, and enable him to maintain there the same state in which he revelled here?

I am afraid we shall not undertake a crusade against the "great customs." Knight-errantry, public or private, is at a discount, and such an expedition might send up the price of palm oil. Our hope is in the growing scepticism of the young.

Major Ellis witnessed, in 1884, at Cape Coast, a great function — "ordination," we should call it, of novices, dances of priests and priestesses, and their "possession," or inspiration, by the gods of whom they were respectively the ministers. To him, the pretence of inspiration was so palpable, the fraud so gross, that he was not astonished to see many of the young people sceptical, some openly laughing. Only the old men and women were smeared with white clay in honour of the gods, and now and then entered the circle and danced a few steps in the sacred chorus. He thought it a satire on our "civilising mission" that such performances could be looked on with reverence, even by the aged, in a town which had been in our hands for two hundred and fifty years. Shall we have to wait two hundred and fifty years more for the "growing scepticism of the young" to assert itself and put down the "great customs," as other like customs have been put down?

How long, I wonder, did the Japanese go on drowning a dozen youths and maidens yearly, in their chief river, to avoid floods and yet secure a good water supply, before they thought of substituting the clay images which are—or were till everything in Japan got Europeanised—solemnly flung in in lieu of the living victims?

Things move slowly; let us hope that they do move on the right lines even in the Dark Continent.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER XII. LA TOUR BLANCHE.

THROUGH the fields of France, past vineyard slopes bare and brown, past running streams, old white water-mills, rows of poplars whose few yellow leaves rustled softly against their slender grey stems, from one little wayside town, with its quaint old church, to another, with its stately old château, a Frenchman and his daughter were travelling down from Tours into the west.

The two were a curious contrast, and no one would have guessed at once that they were father and child. He was tall, broad, and fair; she, a girl of about fourteen, very small and childish-looking for her age, was extremely dark, with a fine, delicate little profile, large black eyes of velvet softness, with long curling lashes, and a quantity of jet-black hair, which made a natural frizz all over her head, and fell in a thick curly mane on her shoulders. She was dressed in a thick dark blue frock, with a picturesque sort of cloak caught up with ribbons, and a round hat on the back of her head, under which the bright little face changed its expression twenty times in a minute.

She and her father were alone in the railway-carriage, and were talking and laughing as fast as they could—she was talking, that is, and he was laughing at her jokes, and at the stories she was telling him about her friends at the convent she had just left.

"I do not quite know why grandmamma means to send me to a new convent, papa," she said, with a faint shadow on her face.

He looked troubled, too, for a moment.

"That you may be near her, petite, you understand. And near me, too, when I am in Paris—after all, though, the fault is not grandmamma's; it's mine."

"Ah, bad little papa! you don't know what it is to make all your friends over again, and your enemies, too. And they are sure to be horrid girls in Paris, who won't let me tease them. Ah, I shall have to be so very *comme-il-faut*, it breaks my heart to think of it."

"La, la! don't let us hear about broken hearts, and all those tragedies. There are

worse things to make over again than friends, or enemies either."

"Confessions, when one has done the same sins over and over again!" suggested the child, lifting her eyebrows with a solemn little air.

"Ah, yes, terrible," said her father, smiling faintly. "Well, Antoinette, your grandmamma and I have been obliged to talk things over seriously."

"That was a little terrible."

"Yes, more than a little. And she wanted you near her, which was quite right, and I wanted you, just at this moment, to go home with me for two days. So grandmamma wrote to the reverend Mother and arranged it, do you see? And your holidays this winter will be longer than usual, because I shall take you back to Paris with me. And listen: grandmamma thinks you will catch cold if you go with me to La Tour Blanche when all the leaves are falling. You must promise me to do nothing of the sort, or I leave you at Saint Bernard with Madame de Cernay."

"If you please, papa, don't do that," exclaimed Antoinette.

"Very well; but remember, if you go to Paris with a cough, grandmamma will never forgive me. The poor dear lady hates La Tour Blanche already, and what would she say then? She would take my little Netta away from me for ever."

"Oh no, papa, you and I will be very careful," said the child, slipping her hand into his arm. "We both love old Tour Blanche; we won't let grandmamma hate it any more. Do you know what I should like, little papa, if I could have my own way?"

"Something extravagant. A fine velvet frock, for instance, instead of this old blue thing."

"No—well, it is absolutely older than you think, though I do wear out my frock faster than other people. But this is a beautiful plan. I said it at recreation the other day, when we all gave our ideas of happiness—to live alone with you at La Tour Blanche. The others laughed, but it was quite true. I can't think of anything happier. We should never be sad or dull, you and I; we understand each other so magnificently. We should amuse ourselves all day long, and never want to go to Paris. I don't care for Paris, myself."

Her father made no answer at once, but leaned back in his seat, pulling his fair moustache, and stared out of the opposite window.

"What, nobody but you and I? Not grandmamma?" he said.

"No, she would always be calling me in to take care of my complexion. Besides, she wouldn't come."

"And you would grow up a nice little savage. And have you forgotten that the place is half tumbling down, stained with damp, half furnished, except with dust, and rats, and ghosts?"

"Ah, mon Dieu!" murmured Antoinette; and she crossed herself, for the train was gliding past a cemetery on a hill, at the entrance of a little town. "I would rather live in it like that, than not at all," she said. "But we must restore it, like Monsieur de Cernay. I have heard you say that Saint Bernard was a funny old place years ago."

"So it was, petite: but M. de Cernay is a rich man, do you see? I am a poor man. But here we are: we must talk about these things another time."

After passing under the cemetery hill they crept a few hundred yards farther, between garden walls, till they reached the small station of Saint Bernard, and here they got out. The faces of the officials softened as they greeted Antoinette's father; he was evidently a popular man.

"Bon jour, Monsieur le Marquis. Pom-mard is outside there with the dog-cart," said one of them.

"Monsieur le Baron was here just now, asking for Monsieur," cried another. "Somebody told him the train had come in, and he went away."

"He is not far off. Call him back, somebody. Your baggage, Monsieur: allow me."

Even a few years ago, it was by no means common for a French gentleman in his own country to meet with all these signs of popularity. But this man was a hero among his own people, partly from the extraordinary sweet temper and good nature which saved some men of his kind in the great Revolution. They were proud of him, and somehow not envious, as he stood among them like a great fair Englishman, taller than any of them; and the English were popular in France then. Outside the station a shabby dog-cart was waiting, drawn by a rough-coated horse, which a young man in plain clothes was holding. If a Marquis's coronet had not been visible on cart and harness, the conveyance, from its looks, might have belonged to some farmer.

"We shall overtake M. de Cernay," said the Marquis, as he helped his daughter into

the front seat of the dog-cart. But before he had time to get in himself, a small, dark, ugly man came bustling back along the road, hot with haste, under the grey sky.

"My dear Montmirail! My dear Achille!" cried M. de Cernay, whose smile was most agreeable. "You are not going straight off to La Tour Blanche? Mademoiselle, how do you do? Charmed to see you; it is a privilege to see our neighbours again. But you must dine and sleep at our house, my dear Achille. My wife will never forgive me if I go back without you and Mademoiselle Antoinette."

"Thank you, my dear friend, but——"

"No excuses. We have a great deal to say to you. We have had letters that concern you. What do you say now?" M. de Cernay stopped, smiling more than ever, for some strange agitation showed itself in his friend's face.

"Look here," said the Marquis, laying his hand on De Cernay's shoulder. "Do me this kindness. Make my excuses to Madame de Cernay for this evening, and if you have nothing better to do to-morrow and will drive over to breakfast at La Tour Blanche, I shall be enchanted to see you. There we can talk things over, and you can tell me about—these letters. If Madame de Cernay will honour me and Antoinette by coming with you, though I hardly dare ask her to such an establishment——"

"She will, she will—charmed to renew her friendship with Mademoiselle Antoinette—who, upon my word, is more beautiful than ever," he added more confidentially, with a laughing glance at the child, who smiled at him brightly.

"Dear little Monsieur de Cernay!" she said, as she drove away with her father. "He is very good, but not very good-looking; what do you say?"

"I say there are not many good-looking people in the world."

"You need not complain; you see one whenever you look in the glass."

"Little flatterer, you expect me to believe you. And no doubt you believed M. de Cernay when he said you were beautiful."

"Ah no," she said a little sadly; "I am too black to be pretty; all the girls say so. That was only one of his kind speeches. Don't you think, papa, that women ought to be fair?"

"They say so. I don't know," he answered rather carelessly. Perhaps he was thinking of something else.

"Mamma was dark, to be sure," she

whispered to herself; and then M. de Montmirail whipped the horse impatiently.

"You should have had him clipped, Pommard."

"M. le Marquis gave no orders," answered his man.

They drove through the low white out-skirts of the little town, and then for some distance along a high road, yellow and even, bordered by grass banks with stately grey poplars, large and old, growing in them at regular intervals. Between each five or six of these poplars was a square and tidy heap of stones for mending the road, arranged there by the "cantonniers," who do their work in this artistic fashion. The road ran on perfectly straight up and down hill, as far as one could see, but M. de Montmirail did not drive very far along it. He turned into a green grassy-sided lane, sheltered by bushes and willow-trees, near a clear, quiet stream, where a few small cows and goats were feeding, under the care of a group of wild-looking children. Then he turned up a hill, away from the stream, leaving on the left a picturesque old mill, and some thatched farm-buildings, standing among poplars.

The lane divided itself here, one branch running on by the stream and the trees, the other climbing to higher ground, and presently coming out on a bare upland, with brown ploughed fields stretching away on each side, bleak and lonely, and trees and roofs only to be seen in the distance.

But as they drove on, approaching the brow of a steepish hill, the road made a sudden turn down to the left, and a rich and pretty valley lay before them. In summer, it must have been a mass of greenery; now some of the trees were bare, but others were still clothed in brown and gold and lingering green, and with the red roofs of a village clustered and half-hidden amongst them, even under that grey November sky, the valley had a beauty of its own. Looking down from this point on the road, one saw the white church spire rising below among the varied roofs, and the little shady cemetery enclosed within its walls; and then came the picturesque confusion of trees, rows of poplars marking the stream as it ran through deep meadows and under the road; and then, on the opposite slope, the clustered trees broke above into bare slopes of vineyard facing the sun, and the top of the hill, higher than on this side of the valley, was covered with dark, gloomy-looking fir-woods.

But the chief feature of that slope was a large white building that rose among the thickest of the trees, its grey slated roof glimmering, looking down on the village in the hollow with an air of stately command and kind protection, as if the great Revolution, for instance, was a thing which had never really come to pass, or, at least, was not worth remembering.

"Dear old Tour Blanche!" exclaimed little Antoinette de Montmirail, as she came in sight of that wild old house among the trees. "I wish we were going to stay there always."

"Do you? Well, I partly agree with you," said her father. "I should like to live there most of the year, but that is impossible unless the house can be restored; and pray where is the money to come from?"

"Oh, I hate money," said Antoinette. "What happiness if it had never been invented!"

"I don't know, after all," said her father, as they drove down into the village street, "that it would be wise to spend so much money here. You see we have so little land here now. The wise thing would be, to sell it to some good man who has made a fortune by chocolate or caramels. What do you say to that? 'Monsieur et Madame Chocolat, et les petits Chocolat.' A grand day for the old Tour Blanche. They would fill it with splendid china, and Louis Quinze furniture, and Gobelins tapestry, and live there magnificently. What do you say? Shall we do it? Your grandmother would be enchanted."

"And two people's hearts would be broken."

"Whose, then?"

"Mine and M. de Cernay's."

"Ah, yes, you are right. M. de Cernay wants me to live here as much as you do. But he knows the difficulties better than you. In fact, I will tell you a secret." The cheerful Achille bent down to his little daughter, and looked quite solemnly into her eyes. "There is only one way in which I can live here, and restore the château," he said close to her ear.

"Is there a way?" she said, gazing up with bright intelligence.

"Yes. Say no more now: here comes M. le Curé. Perhaps I will tell you more to-morrow."

It was necessary to stop and speak to M. le Curé, who smiled welcome all over his sturdy, brown face.

"You had my letter?" said the Marquis.

"Certainly, Monsieur, I was expecting it. At nine o'clock to-morrow, then."

"If you please. And you will stay to breakfast with us, Monsieur le Curé?"

"With pleasure, Monsieur."

There were plenty more greetings as they drove through the village: the inn-keeper, standing at his door under his sign of *Le Corbeau Blanc*; the bricklayer, the blacksmith, working at their trades in the street. The Marquis's hat was constantly off to these and others, and to the women carrying home loaves from the baker or returning wearily from their washing on the river-brink; all these looked up smilingly at the little demoiselle and her father.

"They all like you, papa," she said, when at last the bridge was crossed and they were driving up the wild, untidy, overgrown old avenue of the château.

"They would have much more reason to like M. Chocolat."

"Oh no," answered the girl quickly; "you know very well that the peasants never like the bourgeoisie."

"Where did you get all your knowledge of the world?" he said.

"Not at the convent, you imagine? Bah! one learns a good deal in life besides one's lessons," said Mlle. Antoinette.

"No doubt; but it generally takes a little time, and you are already as wise as your grandmother. What a noise the dogs make!"

"Ah, dear old Ponto, and Fido, and Rataplan! What joy to run about with them again!" she cried; and she was ready to spring out of the dog-cart before it stopped.

"Patience, mademoiselle! a person of your knowledge——" her father remonstrated.

Out of the dimness of the avenue they came into a large court, covered with gravel, and rather weedy. Down the two sides of this court ran high white stone walls, their ruinous state half-hidden by the ivy that clustered over them, and the great chestnut and walnut trees that sheltered them. Each wall ended in a round turret, white, with a pointed grey roof, also half in ruins, and overgrown with ivy. Across the upper side of the square lay the house itself, mounted on a high terrace, and evidently, by the remains of old walls and foundations about it, much smaller now than it had been in former times. On the west side was the great tower that commanded the valley—white, square, and heavy, with windows here and

there. Below this, a long slated roof with a ridge of twisted iron-work ran along to another "pavillon" to the east, smaller, and more inhabited-looking. Then the line of building was broken by an archway with a tall iron gate, reached by a flight of steps, and opening into some sort of garden or "plaisance" behind the château. These steps led also to the door of the chapel, the ancient stones and low vaulting of which showed a greater age than that of the rest of the building. Behind the chapel, to the east, was the stable-yard, sheltered by great trees; and another high white archway led into the yard belonging to a range of farm-buildings; vast barns, with wine-cellar underneath them; cow-houses, pigsties, a duck-pond, more great walnut-trees stretching their boughs across a scene of more than Irish untidiness, with the low door and windows of the farmer's house opening on a grass grown, uneven causeway, raised a few inches above it all.

To the little Demoiselle de Montmirail this château was her beautiful old home, and she would hardly even confess that it wanted restoring. All the windows were unhutted to-day, the doors stood open, and two old friends were waiting on the steps of the terrace. Antoinette jumped down at once into the arms of her old nurse, Suzanne, whose husband, the old valet de chambre, as disagreeable as he was clever and faithful, came forward with a stiff bow and a vinegar smile to receive his master.

"Come then, my child," said Suzanne, and with many loving and admiring remarks she took her little lady into the house, a small black-and-tan terrier dancing joyfully round them, while the dogs in the yard barked their loudest.

Suzanne was a handsome, fat, comfortable woman, with a smiling face and pleasant dark eyes. Everyone under her charge was in peace and in clover. She wore a nice white cap with flying strings, a thick blue linsey skirt, and a loose black jacket. She and Antoinette hurried together into the bare stone hall of the château, from which a broad, shallow staircase of stone led to the upper rooms.

The house was narrow in proportion to its length and height, like all the houses of its time, and the upper storey had originally consisted of large rooms opening one into the other throughout the length of the "corps de logis." The great tower was

divided from the rest of the house by the staircase, and its rooms had not been used for some years. They had been put in order and furnished for the young Marquise, Antoinette's mother, but she had died when her child was not more than two years old, and her husband, living there very little, had never used the tower rooms since. In his father's time, the great inconvenient rooms in the other part of the house had been partitioned and made into smaller ones, with a corridor running along behind them.

The universal brick floors of earlier days had also been changed for wooden ones; but all was now bare, and shabby, and dilapidated; and there certainly was nothing loveable or attractive in the stern old place, with its white walls two or three yards thick, to explain Antoinette's affection for it.

"Mademoiselle's own room is ready for her," said Suzanne, as her young mistress sprang upstairs before her.

And certainly there was something very cheerful in Mademoiselle's own room. Its high window looked out to the terrace, where all the dogs were now jumping round M. le Marquis; it was papered, ceiling and all, with bright pink stripes; the curtains and cover of the bed were also pink. There were gay rugs on the floor, the chimney-piece had a smart clock, and was also adorned with a variety of glass and china which Suzanne had collected at different fêtes and offered to Mademoiselle; there were little pictures on the walls, more bright than beautiful, and by the bed hung a branch of box, now very dead, which had no doubt been blessed in church on Palm Sunday. There were a few old red velvet chairs, a little old chest of drawers, and an arrangement for "eau sucrée."

Suzanne had taken great pains to make this room what she thought her young lady's room ought to be. Behind the brass dogs on the hearth a bright wood fire was burning.

"Oh Suzanne, how pretty it all is!" said the child, and standing in the middle of the floor, she made two or three little jumps in the air. "If papa would only restore the house, and let us live here always! I think I have put it into his head, you know."

"Ah dame! that is good news indeed, mademoiselle," said Suzanne.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XII. NEGOTIATION.

FRED and Dredge, on reaching London, made at once for Pratt's address in Stepney, where, however, he had only stopped in passing. "He had gone South," said his landlady, but whether she meant Battersea or Italy, by "South," they could not tell, nor, seemingly, could she. It was probably not Italy, as she expected him back "shortly." As nothing more definite as to time or place could be extracted from her, our two friends were fain to content themselves with leaving a note to say that it would be greatly to Pratt's profit to see Fred forthwith, and promising to send their address to-night, and to call again in the morning.

Then our two friends took the train back to Fenchurch Street in very low spirits.

"He's gone on the spree, the sweep! He'll drink it dry to the last penny," growled Dredge.

But Fred had just as little doubt that Pratt had gone down to Hawthornden to see Gower, or his father, and to extort a good round sum from them for the letters. He remained wretchedly silent, while Dredge snarled viciously about the certain loss of his fifty pounds.

Encouraged by Fred's silence, which he interpreted to mean a guilty consciousness of his share in the diversion of this fifty pounds from its due destination, he said presently: "Well, it's not my look-out, nor my money."

But Fred, though he heard, did not at all take in the implied threat to hold him answerable for the fifty pounds. Where-

fore Dredge began again, and with greater confidence and bluster.

"Look here, Beresford; I can't give you more than three days, and you had better go about to get the money at once; for it's my belief that the beggar either won't turn up at all, or will turn up drunk and drained out."

Then Fred was roused to take in not only this, but the former hint about "its not being Dredge's look-out," which had remained, as it were, in the ante-chamber of his mind, waiting for admittance.

"You may just fight it out between you, you infernal pair of vampires," he cried suddenly and savagely.

This brought Dredge to his knees at once, for there was no mistaking the sincerity, and even ferocity, of Fred's defiance.

"Hang it all! It's bad enough to lose my money without being slanged into the bargain," he whined in an injured tone.

"Your money! What's your money to—?" Here Fred suddenly remembered and checked himself. After a gloomy pause, he added more calmly: "If that scoundrel turns up with those letters of Gower's, you'll get what you call 'your money' twice over for them."

Now that the prospect of recovering the letters, and, with the letters, his single security against prosecution for forgery, seemed little less than hopeless to Fred, he realized all they meant to him.

With this promise Dredge was fain to be content; since it was perfectly evident that Fred's imagination, at least, had touched bottom, where no threat of sinking him deeper could affect it.

As Fred lived more from hand to mouth and trusted more to the chapter of accidents than most young men, he recovered

enough from the worst of his despondency to try to drown the rest of it in dissipation.

During the rest of the week the two youths rose in the afternoon in the blackest depression after the night's dissipation, and hurried down to Stepney to inquire for Pratt, and to receive always the same stereotyped reply, that he had not yet returned, nor written, but that he might come back at any moment, and that the moment he did the letter left for him should be handed to him. Having discovered that the landlady was a near relation of the deceased Mrs. Pratt, they took care to tell her that "there was money in it," in order to quicken her memory and zeal; but, as she did not really know Pratt's address or plans, this assurance of theirs was not of much service to them. Each afternoon, then, they returned to town in deeper and deeper gloom and glumness, of which they could rid themselves only by deeper and deeper dissipation.

It may be imagined how such a week told on Fred's nerves, until at its close he lost what little hope had remained to him. He had now no doubt at all of what he had had little doubt from the first, that Pratt had gone down to Hawthornden to sell Gower's letters to his father. Whether he had or had not succeeded in selling them, the mere negotiation itself would cut the ground from under Fred's only defence, or rather palliation of his forgery; while the loss of the letters meant to him the loss of his one hostage against prosecution.

All this, in itself sufficiently probable, seemed to Fred, in his present unnerved state, certain. But had his forgery come yet to light? Of this alone he suffered himself to doubt. There was yet time to escape if only he had the means; but he had not. He had spent nearly all that remained to him of the proceeds of the forged cheque upon Dredge and himself in that mad week, and escape without money was impossible.

Where was he to get the necessary sum? Having reviewed all his friends in turn, and in vain, he was giving up hope in heartsick despair, when May's friend, Miss Hick, occurred to him. Hence his application to her. If his forgery had been already discovered this application meant nothing less than giving himself in charge for the crime; but he must risk this, since there was no one else to whom he could apply for the means of escape with the faintest prospect of success. Miss Hick, too, who knew everything in Hammersley, would know whether things went on as

usual at the Vicarage, and whether Gower had been summoned home by an enraged father.

This was the interpretation of that letter to Miss Hick which had so perplexed May. Fred, after many and miserable searchings of heart, having decided at last that such an appeal to Miss Hick, however dangerous, was his one chance of escape from danger, had composed as diplomatic a despatch as he could put together.

Having at last mustered the courage to post this letter in an out-of-the-way pillar-box—with some vague notion of so securing secrecy—he plunged once more into his Lethean river of dissipation, only to find haggard remorse waiting for him on the other bank the next morning.

He waked and rose early, and hurried out to wander aimlessly all day in by-streets, fury-driven by the fear that Miss Hick would hand over his letter to the police, who would wire his address to Scotland Yard. His nerves were so shattered that he was out of all heart and hope, and hardly doubted either that his forgery was discovered, or that the police were put upon his track by Miss Hick.

Only at night did he venture to creep back to his lodgings, which he reconnoitred for nearly an hour before he dared enter them. Immense was his relief to find that no one had been to look for him.

Dredge had decamped upon Fred's mysterious disappearance; under the impression that Fred, having been "cleared out," had left him in pledge for the rent, which the extremely scanty luggage the two youths had brought for a couple of days' stay in town would have gone but a little way towards defraying. Wherefore his landlady welcomed Fred effusively; for, if there is one warmer welcome than that given a coming guest by a landlady—according to Shenstone—it is the welcome given to a returning guest, who has left only his unpaid bill behind him.

Dredge's flight was almost a relief to Fred. It is true that with him went all hope of putting the screw on Pratt for the recovery of Gower's letters; but, as Fred, notwithstanding his reaction of hope on finding neither the police nor even his father awaiting him, was still persuaded that Pratt had shown the letters to Sir George, he did not regret Dredge's desertion.

If, however, there was no hope now at all of recovering the letters, there was still hope of escape by flight. Had his forgery come to light it would

have first been heard of in Hammersley, and Miss Hick would have hastened to give his address, if not to the police, at least to his father, who would have taken the next train to town, and have been awaiting him in his lodgings. It had not yet come to light therefore; and he would have time to quit the country to-morrow—if Miss Hick sent him the means.

It was curious how his spirits rose, not through the reaction from despair merely, but at the prospect of quitting the country, and ending, at one blow, all his troubles. He would wipe the slate clean, and start fresh in America or Australia; he would have done with his debts and duns, and examinations, and the thrice odious prospect of the ministry, and start fair in a new country, on a new career of his own choosing. That he would have done with his father also, and with his idolising mother and sister, did not trouble him much. His father he rather feared than loved, and the idolatry of his mother and sister was an irksome and continual tax upon him; it compelled him to an unrelaxing constraint and hypocrisy in their presence, which was as uncomfortable as walking always on tiptoe, or posing on a pedestal as a statue; he despised them both, indeed, for their infatuation, and showed his contempt for that of his mother only too often and evidently. Still he had always, when at home, to act up to it in some measure; and from this worry also he would henceforth be free!

Really, this was the way the idolised Fred regarded, for the most part, a flight from home, which would simply break both his mother's and his sister's hearts! No doubt, if he saw their agony under his very eyes, he would take it into account and be moved and made uncomfortable by the spectacle; but "out of sight, out of mind," would explain a good deal of Fred's fickleness and heartlessness. The here and the now were everything to him; yesterday, to-morrow, the absent, and the distant, nothing.

On the whole, then, Fred was relieved by the prospect of escape by flight from his troubles. It would be an escape, not only from justice and a jail, but from college, from the church, and from home. Wherefore, he felt lighter-hearted that evening than he had done for some time when left alone with his thoughts. He was too tired to go to his usual haunts or even to stay up long. He went to bed, slept soundly, and rose early in eager ex-

pectation of Miss Hick's reply. He hurried downstairs at the sound of the postman's knock to find a letter from May, as well as one from Miss Hick, awaiting him. This revived all yesterday's terrors for a moment, since Miss Hick must, he thought, have had some very strong reason for taking May into her confidence and giving her his address in spite of his adjuring the old lady to secrecy. He tore open Miss Hick's letter first, and looked at once within it for the cheque, which he extracted with shaking hand and examined greedily. Much encouraged, he proceeded to spell out the old lady's curiously-cramped hand to discover if she had heard anything either of Gower's letters or of his own forgery.

"DEAR FRED, —I enclose cheque for fifty pounds, which I hope is for a good purpose. I hear sad stories of your wildness; but I always warned your father against sending you to college and into the Church. It is only putting temptation in a young man's way, and sooner or later he gets entangled with someone and has to pay for it, like you. If I were you I should put it into the hands of a lawyer, who would get you out of it for ten pounds, or less, I dare say. If you will go to my lawyer, Mr. Sleigh, of 4, Webb Court, Fleet Street, and show him this letter, he will do what he can for you, I know. Only lawyers can deal properly with such designing persons. Take my advice and go to him and tell him everything.

"They are all well at the Vicarage, and Mr. Gower is still there. Is it true that he has been very wild? I have particular reasons for wanting to know. Be sure you tell me this in acknowledging the receipt of the money—of course in confidence—and let me know, too, if you consulted Mr. Sleigh. I have written to Mr. Sleigh to prepare him for your visit.

"Believe me, very truly yours,

"EUPHEMIA HICK.

"P.S.—Is Mr. Gower his father's only son or eldest son?"

It is very easy to see through Miss Hick's not quite disinterested advice to Fred to consult her lawyer. She was raging with anxiety to hear all about Fred's entanglement with the scandalous young person of whose existence, character, and greed she had really no doubt at all; and in her letter to Mr. Sleigh, she demanded from him the details of the case as they might be communicated to him by her young friend Mr. F. Beresford.

At the same time it is only fair to say that she was sure Fred could find no quicker, cheaper, and surer way of extrication from this entanglement than that which Mr. Sleigh would open out for him. As for her particular reasons for wanting to know of Mr. Gower's wildness, they were curiosity and the belief that he must sooner or later fall in love with May.

Fred, however, naturally inferred from this part of her epistle that "The Hammersley Gazette" had heard of Gower's letters to Patty Pratt, and of Fred's connection therewith, through Pratt's attempt to sell them. He tore open May's letter, expecting to find in it confirmation of this; but was greatly relieved and surprised by its silence on the subject.

"DEAR OLD FRED,—I am wretchedly anxious about you. What is the matter? Do tell me, dear old boy. Miss Hick has told me nothing—except that she was sending you a loan—and I got your address only from the envelope of the letter she gave me to post to you. I think you may feel quite sure of her saying nothing about the loan to any one but me; and, of course, telling me didn't matter. I know that you didn't write yourself to me about it, because you didn't want to worry me with troubles that I could do nothing to lighten. That is so like you, dear Fred; but if you knew how it worries me, imagining all kinds of dreadful things, you would write and tell me everything. But now that she has sent you the money, there is nothing to tell, perhaps; and, perhaps, you will be able to come home to-morrow! I do so wish you could, and would, as I just long to see you; and, besides, there's Mr. Gower, who must think your staying away very odd, and who is bored nearly to death, poor man! He bears up bravely, but I can see the terrible life he leads here is telling on him! Fancy him inspecting mills, examining the Second Standard, and Mr. Spratt's black-beetles! It's no wonder he's so dreadfully subdued and 'not in the least like' what I expected from your account of him. You'll say I bore him, and, of course I do—I always know I am boring people when I feel bored by them, and this makes me sure his sufferings must be something terrible. But what can I do? Do come to his rescue—and mine—before it's too late! See how my spirits rise at the prospect of seeing you soon, dear old Fred—to-morrow, perhaps! Do, do come to-morrow; and, if not, at least write to-morrow.—Ever, dear Fred, your loving sister, MAY.

"P.S.—Father seems troubled about you, and mother is really miserable with anxiety. I think it would be better for you to write to her or to father than to me to-morrow, if you can't come then."

Fred ran through this letter without noticing the suggestive reaction and rise of feeling of the latter half as contrasted with the depression expressed in the former, without noticing anything indeed beyond the absence of all hint of trouble to Gower. If there had been any row about the letters, May would have known of it before Miss Hick. Besides, Gower would most certainly have hurried home instead of drivelling about the parish with Spratt or May.

If, then, there had been no row about the letters, Pratt had not gone down with them to Sir George's, and there was hope yet of their redemption. Was there hope enough of their redemption to keep him in England? If he could extort them from Pratt, by Dredge's aid or otherwise, would they be an adequate hostage in his hands against a prosecution by Sir George for forgery?

He paced the room up and down weighing these considerations till a knock at the door brought him to a stand.

"Please, sir, a Mr. Pratt wants to see you."

Pratt!—and Dredge gone!

"Show him up," Fred answered, when he had recovered from his surprise.

Mr. Pratt was shown up accordingly. He entered the room with an incongruous mixture of defence and defiance in his manner, and as though carrying peace or war in his toga.

"I understand you want to see me," he said, weighing his greasy hat between both hands.

After a moment's pause for thought, Fred plunged headlong into business.

"Yes, I want to see you about those letters of Mr. Gower's. They must have fallen out of your pocket that evening when you were tight, for I found them in a corner of my room next morning, just after you left me."

"H'm!"

"I found them near where you had been sitting, and put them into my desk, where you found them," Fred stammered desperately.

"Ay, I found 'em," replied Pratt, with an exceeding and exasperating dryness.

This rasping manner was maddening to Fred, in the irritable state to which dis-

sipation had reduced him; but he was even more cowed than exasperated by the insolence of the man's manner.

"Mr. Gower would be glad to get them back," he said, somewhat helplessly.

Pratt's sole reply was an odious laugh.

"What do you want for them?" asked Fred, with irrepressible irritation.

"That's for the jury—for a British jury to say," retorted Pratt blusteringly.

"A jury! What's a jury got to do with it?" asked Fred, with a feeble affectation of perplexity.

"Come, come, Mr. Beresford; you know what's in them letters as well as me. You read 'em when you stole 'em, I reckon; and you read a Breach of Promise in every one on 'em. Cut 'em, shuffle 'em, and deal 'em as you like to a British jury, and there's a verdict in any one on 'em to the tune of five thousand pounds!"

"When they see the lady's letters?" sneered Fred.

"The lady's letters wor lady's letters, an' wor letters written to a gentleman," retorted Pratt venomously.

But the retort only suggested a telling rejoinder to Fred.

"But there are letters, written by this lady, which can be, and which will be produced in Court; and there's a verdict in any one of them, as you put it, of just one farthing, or less."

This shaft shot home.

Fred had unfortunately destroyed Pattie's precious epistles to himself; but this her father could not know. He was so evidently disconcerted, that Fred followed up his advantage:

"The fact is, Mr. Pratt, those letters are just worth the paper they're written on, and no more. However, Mr. Gower will be glad to buy them back, to save them from being shown all over Cambridge."

"Has he sent you on this business?"

"Yes; he's staying with us at present, and he asked me to see you about them."

Pratt remained silent, turning this thing over and over in his own mind: "Would Fred, for friendship's sake, allow letters from Pattie, which would cover himself with shame, to be exposed to a grinning Court and public?" Suddenly a thought occurred to him to decide him.

"How much?" he asked sulkily.

"A pound a-piece."

Pratt turned sharply upon his heel; but before he reached the door Fred arrested him by asking in turn:

"Well, how much?"

After a long haggle, Pratt asked a few days to consider, and to fetch the letters from Cambridge.

GREAT PRESERVERS.

New lamps for old; broad, new avenues for narrow, old streets; new theatres, so new, that their foundations are not yet laid; palatial rows of shops and warerooms, existing only in the imagination, or as elevations in the portfolios of speculative architects; all the promise of these brave new thoroughfares, which shall be so imposing and splendid in years to come; all the actual performance of the present in the way of wooden hoardings, and notices of building-sites for sale, with broken ends of old-fashioned streets and dusky back premises, studded with boards announcing ancient lights, all this breaking down of old London and building it up anew, raises a feeling of amazement in one who is searching for Soho. Here it was once, but where is it now? How to pick up the ends of these vanished streets and follow the old familiar tracks, when there is nothing but width and length, and perspectives of wooden hoardings, with vacancy brooding over all, as a starting point for the search? But the name of Sutton Street strikes the eye, and at once the feeling of being out of all topographical soundings is removed. For here is the Catholic Church, which represents the old saloon of Carlisle House—the scene of Madame Cornely's balls and routs, a hundred years ago—and where carriages and chairs were once thickly crowded, waiting to take up or set down the patched and powdered beauties of the day; now are waiting carts and railway vans, and general vehicles, to take up crates of pickles, boxes of jams and marmalade, cases of those tinned delicacies that travel all over the world, and are relished as well under the gleaming Dog-star as in the frosty regions of Arcturus.

Yes, these be now the enchantments of Soho, enchantments that have raised big warehouses and factories, aligned upon the new thoroughfare, with buildings where the delicate manipulations of the cuisine are carried on, and whose aromatic influence attracts us even into Soho Square. Pleasant old square; what generations have feasted, and danced, and passed away behind those warm and hand-

some façades, with windows brightly shining; with honest substantial dignity of pilasters, friezes, and other embellishments! The great mansion of the Duke of Monmouth, which once occupied nearly the whole of the south side of the square, has vanished utterly, as well as Carlisle House at the corner by Sutton Street, and the buildings that have replaced them are hardly older than the century; but houses still remain that date from the time of Queen Anne or the earlier Georges. It is within living memory that the square was still a place of residence of distinction, if not of the latest mode. In the south-west corner lived Mr. Barnes of the "Times," a potentate whose influence exceeded that of any editor before or since, a real Jupiter Tonans, whose voice influenced the fate of Ministries, and who was looked upon as the arbiter of contending parties. That finely-ornamented house in the opposite corner belonged to some famous physician, and is now a hospital for Diseases of the Heart.

But the handsomest and best preserved of these old houses is No. 21, one of the row now occupied by Messrs. Crosse and Blackwell, which was once the town-house of Thomas Belasye, Lord Fauconberg. This was the grandson of the first Lord Fauconberg, who fought for King Charles at Marston Moor; but the family—like their friends the Fairfaxes—were of a Presbyterian turn, and, during the Commonwealth, our Lord Fauconberg married Mary, the daughter of the Lord Protector. The family has long been extinct; but the house still retains traces of its ancient dignity. The rooms are lofty and well proportioned, and, in some of the upper ones, the highly-enriched ceilings have been preserved and restored, and there are fine open hearths and richly-carved chimney-pieces, with armorial bearings emblazoned here and there.

Thus handsomely housed are the ledgers and cash-books of the great preserving firm. Here is a celerity, silence, and order that suggest the offices of some important bank or public company; but we may cease to wonder at the scale on which affairs are conducted when we reflect that there is nothing more important, either in an army or in the world in general, than the commissariat department.

And how great the demand is everywhere for condiments of all kinds, and for portable forms of nourishment that render people independent of cooks, as well as for

the luscious conserves of all kinds of fruits that are now found on every table, a demand which increases in the sturdy proportions of the increase of the Anglo-Saxon race.

When we leave the orderly precincts of the counting-houses of Messrs. Crosse and Blackwell, and enter by some short but mysterious passage into another set of buildings, a wonderful scene meets the eye. Nor is the entertainment confined to the eye; there is an odour that makes one feel hungry. Here is a company of men-cooks, in their regulation white costume, with attendant kitchen-maids, or helpers of the female sex. Here are vegetables being chopped; there are the savoury steams of frying. It is all soup, soup, mock-turtle, julienne, what you will—each little tin has its due allowance of meat and condiment, each its due proportion of stock, and passes on in never-ending procession to its final boiling-up, and hermetically sealing stage.

This vision passes away, and next is a great room, with machinery in full whirr. Here are sausages, twining out in long succession; weighed, and placed in tins; and then, having gone through the usual processes, will turn up some day at breakfast-tables far away. Then there are protected vessels, where great knives whirl round and reduce the flesh of beeves and swine into a soft, pulpy substance, which presently—in gallipots, with each its snowy covering of clarified butter—will tempt the jaded appetite as potted meat.

In the manipulation of all these things, women are chiefly employed, with men to perform any heavy work, and to attend to the machinery. Women, neat and clean, with long white aprons enveloping them from head to foot. Upstairs and downstairs, too, women are at work, wrapping, packing, pasting. They are grown women mostly, tall and strong, who go about their work with the intentness and resolution of people who are paid by the piece, and not by time.

It is a wonderful army, this, of working women, of which we catch a glimpse here and there—in the ranks of which a new character for women seems in course of developement. Silent, rather than talkative, self-reliant, somewhat cynical—these are traits that seem to mark the coming woman, if she be not actually come. There are many good women who, taking the lead in social movements, continually ask for more employments to be open for

women; but one's impression—derived from sampling, so to say, a good many industries—is that women are helping themselves pretty freely in that line, and that the most burning question of the future will be what is to be done with the men. These remarks are not particularly appropriate to our present subject, but they are irresistibly suggested by the sight of all these industrious women, with their grave faces, nimble hands, and steadfast demeanour.

It is now the time of oranges. Swift steamers have crossed the seas from Spain and the Azores, from Sicily and all those shores where the golden fruit is grown to perfection. The round-topped cases have been piled at the docks, the warehouses about Eastcheap and the Monument have been crammed with the fresh arrivals, and a goodly quantity from the pleasant groves of Seville have found their way to Soho Square.

Here is an enormous cauldron of them freshly boiled. Nimble fingers open them with knives, strip the skins of their pulp, which falls into another vat, and the rinds, passed to another row of female operatives, are pressed into machines like chaff-cutters on a reduced scale, where they are sliced into shavings so fine that a handful of them feels like a ball of down.

Mixed with the pulp, and with a due proportion of syrup, we may follow the mixture into a long room higher up, where stand, on massive pedestals, some fifty or sixty polished brazen vases. Each vase will hold two hundred pounds of marmalade; for such we may call it now.

And there are men-cooks here, who walk to and fro, and take note of how the pots are boiling. For, by turning a tap, jets of steam are introduced into the brazen vase, and its contents are forthwith in brisk ebullition.

In fifteen minutes the two hundred pounds of marmalade will be completely cooked. Then the steam will be turned off, and, after that, another tap will be opened, which communicates with a pipe that drains off the whole boiling into a lower room where it will be soon ready for the process of potting and bottling.

Now, if you have fifty of these vases, each capable of boiling two hundred pounds of marmalade in fifteen minutes, it is a nice little problem that may be solved without the aid of algebra, as to the quantity that may be produced in so many working hours.

By the way, while on the subject of marmalade, here is an old manuscript receipt of the year 1650, or thereabouts, which shows that our ancestors were acquainted with the thing itself and appreciated it, although they had not yet given it a name: "Take bark of orrenges, lemmons, citrons; first boyl them whol till they be soft, then make a syrup with sugar and the liquor you boiled them in, and keep the barks in the sugar. They are kept in glasses or glassed pots. The preserve will keep a year, if you can forbear eating of them."

It would not be possible to witness the operations of preserving our native fruits, and the making of marmalade, at the same time; the march of the seasons will not permit such a conjunction. We can only take a glimpse at the reserve supplies of jam in great jars, which are ranged in their appropriate store-rooms. But pickles are always with us; here are onions in barrels, chiefly from Essex, and broccoli from Kent, and great pans of piccalilli, the latter more popular, perhaps, than any other form of pickle.

Then there is the popular calves' feet jelly, which is slowly being filtered through gigantic jelly bags, and which comes out with a clearness and lucidity which the most skilful housewife of old could not always secure. When the jelly is finally run into bottles and corked, it is necessary to expel the air that remains in the neck of the bottle, and this is done by placing the bottles—whole battalions of them at once—into a bath of boiling water, the corks being secured each one by an iron clamp. The cork gives sufficiently to allow of the escape of the heated air, while, as the bottle cools, the pressure of the outside air drives the cork firmly home. It takes a long pull and a strong pull to uncork that bottle; but any other way the jelly might become mouldy at the top, and, acquainted with this fact, you will not repine at the exercise of a little surplus energy over the corkscrew.

While taking notice of all these things we have been led hither and thither, through covered ways and over bridges from one building to another, till it is a matter of uncertainty as to whether we are near Soho Square. But anyhow here in a quiet and polished seclusion is a lofty engine-room, where a bright and shining steam-engine performs its functions almost silently, and where the mouths of six furnaces under as many steam-boilers open

into the depths below. The boilers furnish steam for the various processes of boiling, cooking, and macerating that are always going on. And with shafts, and drums, and bands, the engine sets in motion the various labour-saving contrivances all over the place. Then there is a cooperage, where casks are put together, and cases of various kinds; while of rooms devoted to bottling, canning, soldering, and other processes, it is easy to lose count. Numbers of women, too, are engaged in labelling, in capsuling, in wrapping. You pass from room to room, from warehouse to warehouse. Soho in general seems to be honeycombed with the offshoots and annexes of the great purveying firm.

If we could but summon up the shade of one of the farmer's housewives of old, how the respectable old ghost would open her eyes at the sight of all these buildings, and these companies of male and female artificers engaged in the work she used to perform almost single-handed, with her skillets and copper saucepans in her old-fashioned kitchen and still-room!

All this time we have said nothing about sauces, and for the good and sufficient reason that there is nothing revealed to the outer world of the manner of compounding these recondite essences. There are secrets about sauces which are only known to the initiated, and when you consider that not long ago the part proprietor of a favourite sauce died worth more than half-a-million of money, you can judge how carefully such precious secrets must be guarded.

But we have seen and explored enough, thanks to the courtesy of the proprietors of this great establishment, and so we pass out into the quiet, business-like precincts of the old-fashioned square. The flambeaux, the carriages, the lacqueys, the young bloods with swords and periwigs, the powdered dames in flowered sacques, and hoops, and stomachers, the running footmen, the pugnacious chairmen, all those who once frequented the fashionable haunts of the square, rise for a moment before the mind's eye, and then we make our obeisance to the modern "genius loci," and hail the first omnibus that is passing along the new avenue towards Charing Cross.

AN EASY CHANGE WHEN WANTED

"THIS is indeed a change," said an amiable lady, as we drove, with her London-worn husband, in an open carriage,

along an up-hill road. "The change is so complete that the doctor, were he here, could not help approving our obedience to his instructions."

"And this open country, with fields as unenclosed as if they were waste land, whereas they are highly cultivated; this undulating landscape, a grand mosaic of variously-tinted greens and browns, with here and there a yellow patch of flowering colza, to furnish lamp-oil by-and-by, so brilliant and bright that few of your painters dare put that in their pictures; and this gradual slope, over which the eye wanders to the right and the left, without interruption, screen, or impediment—do you like it?"

"I hardly know, though it is refreshing to our lungs as well as novel to our sight. Perhaps I might, if I were used to it."

"I am used to it and do like it now. A walk into the country here produces the same effect as emerging in autumn from one of your plantation-bound, ring-fenced, over-timbered parks, to the outspread space of a breezy common."

"But if our road is not bounded by hedge-rows it is at least adorned by one mark of civilisation—milestones."

"I beg your pardon; there are no miles here, but kilomètres, of which that stone marks the end of one and the beginning of another. A kilomètre, you know, is a thousand mètres, a mètre being the ten-millionth part of the arc of the terrestrial meridian comprised between the North Pole and the Equator."

"You are taking me a little out of my depth, I fear."

"Not a bit of it. You must have learnt the use of the globes at school. The mètre measures all lengths in France, from ribbons to railways. Four kilomètres make a league—two miles and a half. The comparison, therefore, of French with English measured distances is a capital exercise in mental arithmetic. But if you desire shelter we are nearing the forest."

"Ah, yes; I see it before us. That will be again a change."

"This bit of it will soon be traversed, for it is only the fag-end of the woods, which stretch for miles—I mean kilomètres—to the left, along the summit of this range of hills. From them I procure nearly all my fuel. We burn wood everywhere in the house except in the 'cuisinière,' or cooking-stove. Being on the chalk, with no stagnant pools, the air is fresh and pure. In early summer, invalids come

here to bask in sunny nooks and glades, and to breathe the oxygen emitted by the growing leaves. From spring to autumn there is a successional series, in various spots best suited to their nature, of lovely flowers, some far from common. I am acquainted with a little girl, the daughter of a forest-keeper, so fond of pretty plants that she rambles through the thickets in search of her favourites without ever losing her way. She brings me choice specimens of terrestrial orchids, whose blossoms mimic flies and humble bees, which I persuade to flower in my little garden."

"But is she not afraid of wild animals?"

"She has no reason to be afraid. Once a year, when hazel nuts are ripe, a report is spread that a wolf has been seen in the forest; but no one ever says that he has seen it. Foxes run away and hide. Vipers do not bite unless hurt. In winter, the woodmen find sleeping dormice, which are in some request as schoolboys' pets. Wild boars there were none till the Franco-German war, when, frightened by the firing, they decamped from the Vosges and favoured us with their presence. Finding their new quarters pleasant, they remain."

"But are they dangerous?"

"Not unless you attack them; which no one in his senses would, unarmed. Our sportsmen keep their numbers down, and proud, indeed, they are of showing the head, or even a handful of the bristles, of the boar that they have slain. But we are out of the wood now, so we may shout when we like. Only, please shut your eyes for a moment."

"Why? Are we coming to anything horrible?"

"No; quite the contrary. At last we are at the top of the eminence. The horses will be glad of a few minutes' breathing time. Now, open sesame! Behold! I knew a poor consumptive fellow who, the day before he died, begged to be driven here in order to look once more at that. It will not tire, for a while at least. Yonder, that blue streak in the horizon is the English Channel; that brown elevation is the back of Cape Blanez, whose white cliffs face Folkestone and Dover; behind and below us lies the forest, like a wide-spread carpet of tufted green wool embroidery; farther on is the alluvial plain which stretches into Belgium; before us, cottages, hills, rows of trees, village spires, and fields, are so nicely grouped and distributed that you will see them sooner, and better than I am able to enumerate them."

In short, my friends were so satisfied with their experimental trip, that I thought I might be doing others a service by putting on paper a few hints that may interest those who are inclined to try the good effects on mind and body, produced by change of air and scene for longer or shorter periods.

A recreative excursion, a rushing tour, is not what is here meant by a change, which implies a rest, a period of repose. The first only asks the question, "Whither, and back again?" The other makes the calm inquiry, "Where?"

For those who decide to essay their change in France, the Department of the Pas-de-Calais offers great convenience. It is pleasant to find on your breakfast-table letters and journals posted in London the previous evening. Residence at a greater distance inland, of course, involves a longer delay in delivery—which is sometimes of importance. Certainly, there is the telegraph, when communication is urgent; but the telegraph, unfortunately, does not yet convey passengers in case of emergency.

The climate of the north of France greatly resembles that of the South of England; on the coast it is, perhaps, more variable, but perhaps, also, clearer. You can breathe without having your windpipe rasped and scraped by London fog. The fruits of the centre and the south—cherries, greengages, melons, grapes—are brought to you by railway, early, rapidly, and cheaply, without your having to bear the heats that have ripened them.

In the central region of France, while the summers are splendid the winters are so sharp that evergreens which remain throughout the year in English gardens—arbutus, laurustinus, laurel—are obliged to be sheltered in greenhouses, or otherwise protected.

Plants are an unerring test of climate. At Montpellier they show you a lofty bay-tree in proof of the mildness of their winters.

In the sunny South, where invalids and others love to winter at their ease, the heat, for several months in the year, compels you to remain indoors from eight in the morning till five or six in the evening—unless you chose to justify the Italians who say that, between those hours, none but dogs and Englishmen are to be seen in the streets. Soldiers even, for their health's sake, are confined to barracks during the middle of the day. Such a climate detracts considerably from the eligi-

bility of the South for a permanent sojourn; to which inconvenience may be added the superabundance of insects.

On the other hand, it ought, in justice, to be mentioned, that living is cheaper in the South, partly because the distance checks the persistent drain of provisions for the supply of England, and partly because wine is there included in table-d'hôte, and such like charges, whereas, in the North, it is an extra.

In the South you may enjoy to your hearts', and, perhaps, to your healths' content, delicious but perishable fruits, which bear carriage badly.

In a market at Bordeaux, tempted by fine, plump, round, purple figs which brought the water into my mouth, I asked the price. The woman gravely and solemnly answered:

"Monsieur, the season is advanced, and the fruit is choice. You must not haggle. I cannot let you have them for less than three sous the dozen."

On entering Pau one morning, the first person who accosted me was a fruit-seller offering delicious little blue figs, all covered with untouched bloom, fifteen for a sou. With those, and a penny roll of bread, I made a capital lunch, which supported me well till the table-d'hôte dinner hour.

If one comes to stay a while in France, it is desirable to have some knowledge, even if very little, of the language—such as the numerals, the months, the days of the week, and the weights and measures; which last are very simple and easy to acquire, being based on the decimal metrical system. In large towns, there are sure to be shops with "English spoken" labelled on the windows. In hotels, an Englishman's wants are readily understood and responded to; but in really country places, French must be spoken, no matter how broken and ungrammatical, otherwise, you might as well be wandering along the steppes of Central Asia. Speak it you must, somehow, indifferently or badly; better will come with study and practice. You may have French, which you will have learnt by reading, in your head; but it will require oiling, and some courage, to bring it out from the tongue. Those who hesitate to make use of a foreign language until they can speak it quite correctly, are like the mother who forbade her son to bathe in the river, until he had learned to swim. Hence the disadvantage of residing abroad, where English colonies exclusively associate together.

One warm summer's afternoon, while tramping at some little distance from Boulogne, with the intention of reaching, not the town, but a village on the coast, I encountered an individual who tried hard to address me in French, and failed. Pitying his vain efforts, I said to him: "I think you will get on better in English. If I guess rightly, you wish to know where you can get a nice cool glass of light French beer. Yes? Walk with me then a little way, and I will introduce you to what you want."

He did walk with me, and confessed that after residing twelve years in Boulogne he had made no further progress in French than that. He has still to pass his competitive examination.

For those who, while on pleasure bent, are still, like Mrs. Gilpin, of frugal mind, it is an agreeable, as well as a convenient circumstance, that, in provincial France, in the country, and in small country towns, no one is despised or looked down upon for leading a quiet, unpretending life—provided every debt is duly paid, or, what is better, all debts avoided. Economy, saving, sometimes parsimony, is the general rule with the French provincial middle-classes, work-people, and peasantry. They do not disapprove of other folk's practising what they practise themselves.

Consequently, there is no need, as often happens in England, for a family to strain every point, and even to pinch and deny themselves sundry little comforts, for the sake of keeping up appearances. "Paraître," to make a show, is considered worthless in comparison with "être," to be in easy circumstances and to have money in one's pocket or in safe deposit.

"Mangeurs d'argent," eaters-up of money, as spendthrifts are called, are rare among the working-classes in the country. Nevertheless, such cases do occur, almost always the consequence of some unexpected legacy or divisional inheritance falling in. It is then an example of the beggar on horseback, the horse ridden being mostly named "Drink." The ride goes on at a rapid pace; and the rider often cleverly contrives to die of his good luck just at the moment when his funds are exhausted.

His premature end excites no pity, for him at least; but people do pity the money so stupidly spent, which might have been put to a better purpose—to wit, in the purchase of a cottage and a bit of land, or invested in the Three per Cent. when the

funds are low, or treasured in an old stocking beneath the mattress.

Respectable people, living on their income and paying their way, do not lose caste if the lady assists in housework, makes her own bed, helps to do the choice part of the cooking, and manages to get on with the aid of a charwoman twice or thrice a week, or even does without one altogether. French folk, with a good-sized, well-furnished house, will live almost entirely in the kitchen, reserving their salon and their "salle-à-manger" for grand occasions; though they hardly reach the exclusiveness of certain Dutch ladies, who would refuse to show their state apartments to an emperor, because they are sure he would not take off his shoes.

In like manner, there is no need for strangers or temporary residents to be over-anxious about their costume, so long as it is neither too swell nor too shabby. Naturally, an economical people does not trouble itself overmuch about dress. Everybody that is anybody, and a good many that are nobody, have their Sunday suit hanging in their closet, ready for fête days, weddings, and funerals. For week days, if it be but clean, warm, and whole, that suffices.

It follows that you must not estimate a man's means by his outward attire. You will meet many whom you would never suspect, at least at first sight, to be rich, but who are rich notwithstanding. To some extent they take after a certain miserly country banker who, when reproached by his friends for wearing such old and threadbare clothes, replied:

"What does it signify? Everybody knows me."

"But when you go to London," they said, "it is just the same."

"What does it matter?" was again his answer. "Nobody knows me."

And it must be admitted that both those excuses were valid.

Under the Second Empire, however, a large development of the love of finery, amongst middle and working-class females, set in. Showy gowns, exaggerating the fashionable absurdities of the day, grew into greater favour with them than the plentiful stocks of linen and under-garments which once were the pride of their mothers and grandmothers. The shackles of distinctive class costume were gradually shaken off. Young girls now dress after the fashion-prints, instead of in accordance with family tradition. Liberty and

Equality have decided that among the Rights of Democratic Woman, is the right to wear befeathered and beflowered high-crowned hats instead of snow-white caps.

For general expenses, and in the rough, we may take it that a franc, approximately tenpence, does the duty of a shilling; and, as twenty-five francs go to a sovereign at par, with the exchange almost always a trifle in favour of the sovereign, the advantage is clearly discernible. It is a multiplication of loaves and fishes produced by the conversion of a sovereign into francs.

French accounts are kept in francs and centimes—the only legal reckoning. One hundred centimes make a franc, or tenpence. Consequently, ten centimes make a penny, five a halfpenny or "sou," in popular parlance, but authoritatively, a five-centime piece. The price of articles in shops may not be ticketed in sous, but in centimes, by which strangers are often puzzled. But fifty centimes is simply half-a-franc, or fivepence; and seventy-five centimes, fifteen sous, three-fourths of a franc, or sevenpence-halfpenny. The word "sou" is as universally current as the coin. A "petit sou" is a five-centime, a "gros sou" a ten-centime piece. A five-franc piece is frequently spoken of as "une pièce de cent sous," a hundred-sou piece.

Old-fashioned and noble persons will speak of their friends as having so many thousand "livres" of income. Those livres are not pounds, but francs. In country markets, farmers will make bargains in "écus" (crowns)—three francs, and "pistolet"—ten francs; but no corresponding coins exist.

The octroi laws cause a sensible inequality in the expense of living in France. As we have nothing of the kind in England, where it would not be tolerated, I may be permitted to explain that the octroi is a tax levied on provisions, drinks, combustibles, and sundry other articles, as they enter towns. Call it town-dues, or city toll. The heaviness of the tax in each town depends upon the number of its population. For instance, on a barrel of wine yielding three hundred bottles, in one small town, an octroi of less than three francs is paid; in another, seven miles off, the octroi amounts to about forty. Some small towns are altogether excused from octroi, in recompense for bearing other burdens, such as having to lodge soldiers on their way to and from garrison towns. The circle around a town within which octroi

is payable, is strictly defined by posts on the roads entering it; so that while one house within the limit has to pay octroi, another, a few yards off, outside the limit, and considered to be in the country, pays nothing.

The articles liable to octroi duty depend on the will of the municipal authorities. They vary considerably in different towns. The list of such articles in two towns is hardly ever quite identical. At each entrance to a town an Octroi Bureau is posted. On driving into town from the country, an octroi man asks if you have anything to declare, and has the right to search your carriage if he thinks fit.

Defrauding the octroi by smuggling in provisions or liquors, is a heinous sin, punished, when discovered, by a "procès-verbal," or report—a vexatious form of imposing a fine. Of course, all this is sometimes an annoyance; but as it is the law, it must be submitted to.

Good stories, too numerous to recapitulate here, are current of the ingenious ways in which the octroi has been done. In Belgium the octroi has been abolished, and now and then there is talk of doing so in France. The great difficulty lies in how to provide for the immense army of employés who would be turned adrift to seek a very easy employment elsewhere; and also in the loss to the powers that be of so large a number of manageable voters.

Rents of houses, and of complete suites of apartments, or flats, are high in large towns, especially in those whose area is circumscribed by fortifications, and whose limitation of space increases its value. In such towns, many army, navy, and other government officers are obliged to take up their residence. Their permanent demand for lodgings naturally keeps up the price. When they depart, they are immediately succeeded by others. In small country towns and villages, rents are moderate—the amount, of course, depending on size, situation, and other favourable or unfavourable details. In the country, too, whole houses are obtainable rather than sets of apartments, which is more in accordance with English habits.

But there are fewer houses to let even in the country than might be supposed, because everybody, high and low, makes every effort to possess a house of his own, and to be independent of the freaks and of the tyranny of landlords. A cottage, not too big for one family, if inherited by two

sons, will be divided and made to hold two families. Of landlords, the most insupportable are some, happily not all, female "propriétaires," otherwise landladies. Like Norval's father, their constant care is to increase their store. They raise their rents or refuse repairs at the first opportunity; and they sometimes burn their fingers by so doing. For months and perhaps years, when they pass their property, they are liable to behold the notice "Maison à louer"—House to let—persistently adhering to its empty walls.

To avoid these annoyances, persons who are certain to reside for a lengthened period in the same locality, often prefer buying to renting a house, being sure to sell it when they depart at no great loss, perhaps at a profit, if times are good. Leases are usually granted for terms of three, six, or nine years, with power to either party to cancel the lease at the end of each term, by giving a year's written notice of the intention. Still, a nine years' lease can be taken, if agreed upon by the parties.

In purchasing fish, poultry, wild-fowl, and other game you must not be afraid to bargain. The great point is to be informed of the current prices, the actual values in the locality. "Caveat emptor"—buyers be on your guard! If you give the vendor, —mostly women—just what they ask, you may make them wretched for days afterwards, at the thought that they had not demanded more. Indeed, a higher price than its worth is habitually put on an article to meet an expected lower offer on the part of the purchaser. Even in shops, the notice, "prix fixe," implies that in other shops the prices are not always fixed.

Tea, of whatever quality, is dear. Good coffee, the national beverage, either black or with milk, is two shillings and threepence the pound. Sugar, lump or powder, sixpence-halfpenny. Eggs are sold at market by the "quarteron"—twenty-six, the quarter of one hundred and four; their price with us on the day of writing this, January twentieth, is fifty sous, or two francs fifty centimes, or two shillings the "quarteron," which is a small fraction less than a penny an egg. In summer, it varies from twenty-six to thirty sous the "quarteron," or to a trifle more than a halfpenny an egg.

In the interior eggs are cheaper, and would be more so, but for the enormous number exported to London, collected by "cocassiers," or wholesale poultry dealers. But contrast these with London prices; and, moreover, the eggs are fresh. Blue

ducks' eggs, and brownish hens' eggs, are preferred for exports to the English market. More on this subject is found in "Our Poultry Supply," Vol. XXVIII., p. 274, of "All the Year Round."

Poultry, killed and plucked, the last operation but imperfectly performed, is sold only in large town markets or in poulterers' shops. In country markets, fowls, ducks, geese, and turkeys are sold alive in couples; and this is the cheapest way of purchasing them, especially if you have a small, enclosed, sunny corner, where you can feed and fatten them for a week or two.

With the small, half-wild call-ducks of the marsh—very pretty creatures, and very good eating—you must take the precaution of clipping one of their wings. If not, they will suddenly rise in the air, and fly off to their birthplace, like so many pigeons.

Good beef, veal, and pork are now about a franc the pound; mutton a trifle dearer. All these meats ought to be cheaper, owing to agricultural distress and last summer's drought, but the butchers, between them, manage to keep up the prices, and to feather their nests.

The French pound is so much heavier than the English as to make a considerable difference when a large joint has to be purchased, and a family to be provided for. The standard weight for selling dry goods is the kilogramme, abbreviated to kilo, one thousand grammes equal to two pounds and one-fifth avoirdupois. A pound weight, "une livre"—feminine; while "un livre," a book, is masculine—is a demi-kilo, five hundred grammes. The visitor, therefore, seeing articles marked so much the half-kilo, will understand that it is only another expression for a French pound weight.

Wages in towns are rather high. Servants are hired and paid by the month, not by the quarter; which does not prevent their remaining with you if it suits them. When fault has to be found, you may make a few gentle observations; but French servants do not like being scolded, which will sometimes send them off in a tiff.

For a man-servant of all work, you will do well to take a young one who has just finished his term of service in the army. Perhaps, during his military career, he may have had to eat "un peu de vache enragée," a few meals off mad cow, in other words, to have undergone hardship; which

will make him all the more glad to light on his legs in a comfortable place. If he has been orderly to one of his officers, and if the said officer was married, so much the better. In that case, besides learning obedience and punctuality, he will be able and ready to sweep out the rooms, make the beds, cook a plain dinner, wait at table, and take care of the baby, besides performing sundry other indoor and outdoor duties.

In the country, you may meet with a hale young lass who will turn her hand to any rural employment. She is not exactly the London upper housemaid, where two or three are kept. She will not raise discussions based on "it isn't my place" to do this or that; but she will milk the cow, feed the pig, kill and pluck the poultry, dig in the garden, and even harness the horse in case of need. Of course, her ways will be a little rough, and her conversation interspersed with flowers of patois; but she will bear teaching, if kindly taught, and will stay with you, perhaps for years, if she takes a liking to you, and finds it her interest to stay. Or perhaps, after you have improved her mind and polished her manners, she will migrate to the nearest large town, to better herself, rejoin her old sweetheart, or look out for a new one. Still, French countrywomen are warmly attached to a home when once they have kindly taken to it.

HUSH!

HUSH! for the red leaves are drifting.
Strive not to sweep them away;
Stir not the air by complaining—
A sweet hope lies dying to-day.

Hush! while the clouds on the hill-side
Are gathering sullen and grey.
Ask not for vanishing sunlight—
A great trust lies dying to-day.

Hush! while the low winds are moaning,
Like a sigh from a heart we betray.
Strive not to read what they tell us—
A first love lies dying to-day.

Hush! Fate and Nature are comrades.
They rule: what avails it to say
That hope, trust, and love made our life sweet,
Since all are laid dying to-day?

THE LAST OF HIS RACE.

LOUIS GILBERT was a new comer to the little mountain village of Cornil. No one knew anything of him beyond his name; that he was a well-looking man of about thirty; of quick, business-like ways; and that he had bought a meadow by the river from Phillipou, the landlord of the

"Repos des Voyageurs," where he was building a red-brick factory with a tall chimney, remarkable as the only erection of its kind to be seen in that wild narrow valley through which the brown river rushes to join the more peaceable Garonne.

No such startling event as the building of the Usine Gilbert had happened in Cornil since the days of the great French Revolution, when the splendid feudal castle of the Marquis de Cornil had been battered into the picturesque ruin which now crowns the steepest point of the wooded ridge.

But, whereas the destruction of the château had faded into the dreamland of a far gone past, of which only old Babette Gannat cared to remember the story, the factory was an event of to-day, and so closely connected with increase of work and wages that every one in the village—excepting, perhaps, Mother Babette—was most keenly interested therein.

Babette was, no doubt, too old and too blind to trouble herself about new things, or to be drawn into the vortex of new excitements. She was getting almost too feeble for her daily pilgrimage from her cottage at the upper end of the village to the walnut tree which grew beside the square tower of the ruin. Almost too feeble, yet she was mostly to be seen there, with her great-granddaughter, Jacqueline, a goat, and a couple of sheep; so that if a stranger came to see the ruins, she might earn a few sous by telling the story of the burning of the castle and of the terrible doom of the de Beaugency, who had held high state there.

While they waited for these rare visitors, the old woman sat and dozed, and Jacqueline, watching the animals, wove a good deal of maidenly perplexity into the threads she spun from her distaff.

So they sat one bright April noon, when Jacqueline, as she twisted her wool, and the animals, as they cropped the young, juicy grass, became aware of a footstep ascending the path which led towards them. The goat gave an inquisitive sniff, the two sheep raised their black noses and made a few timorous steps at random, while Jacqueline's pretty forehead contracted into a frown, and she muttered: "Justin Phillipou again! Has he no sense!" Only old Babette made no sign, because she had heard nothing.

The next moment Jacqueline's frown vanished with a sigh of relief, the sheep scampered wildly round an angle of the

wall, and the old woman roused herself with a gesture of enquiry, as Monsieur Louis Gilbert appeared on the shady side of the ruin.

"Bonjour, mesdames," he said courteously. "It is very pleasant here in the shade."

"It is the monsieur from Paris," whispered Jacqueline to her grandmother.

"Who? What?" queried Babette in return, moving her sightless face to and fro.

"The monsieur who has employed Cousin Pierre to do his carting; he who has bought Phillipou's meadow."

"I am Louis Gilbert, madame," explained the new comer. "You may have heard that I am building the factory down below."

"Ah! you are a stranger, and you have come to see the ruins and to hear the story of the burning of the château," replied the old woman. "All the strangers come to ask about it; but I am getting very old, and I grow tired with talking."

"Then pray don't exert yourself on my behalf. I have known the story you speak of all my life, or at least as long as I can remember."

"Then, it is not true that you are a stranger in Cornil, monsieur, as they all think," said Jacqueline, raising a pair of soft, grey eyes to Gilbert's face.

"The destruction of this castle, and of many another," he replied, giving no direct answer to her question, "is a matter of history; I can easily fill in the details from a hundred similar tales. It has no special features, I expect."

"A hundred similar stories," cried Babette. "Ah! that shows you know nothing about it. Nay, there is no story like it. Those who saw it all have told me that there was never anything like the grandeur and pride to be seen in the castle of the de Beaugency, nor in all the length and breadth of the land was there wickedness and cruelty like that of our seigneurs; from Limoges to Bordeaux they were the wickedest and the worst. At last one they had wronged—it was my grandfather—rose from his death-bed with more than human strength, and dragged himself to the castle courtyard, where the Marquis and his boon companions were playing a 'jeu de paume,' and there he raised his dying hand and his feeble voice, and told the story of his wrongs—those wrongs which would not let him die in peace till he had called down the vengeance of Heaven on the Lords of

Cornil. His words went up to the ear of Heaven, pleading that the evil-doers might be cut off root and branch from the earth till their very name was forgotten. That was a whole generation before the Revolution; but men still remembered those last words of Paul Gannat when the day of reckoning came. It was my father who led the villagers to the assault, and he stood by the guillotine at Tulle, when the last of the hated race had been tracked to his hiding-place and brought back to die. Nay, monsieur, you are wrong to say there are many such stories. It was my grandfather's prophecy working itself out."

"A good many prophecies worked themselves out just then," rejoined Gilbert, who had listened with interest, "at least to the satisfaction of those who desired their fulfilment. But why do you suppose that, because certain of—the De Beaugencys were guillotined, the family is exterminated?"

"I suppose nothing," replied Babette petulantly. "I tell the tale as it was told to me by those who saw what they told; they said that in all the broad land no one was left to call himself by the hated name."

An odd smile crossed Gilbert's lips. "I am afraid you will have to alter the end of your interesting story, whenever you tell it in the future; for the fact is that I know—pretty intimately—a man who claims direct descent from the Marquises de Cornil, and who hopes some day to be in a position to buy back the land which once belonged to his family."

"He never will! he never will!" cried the old woman, with wonderful energy. "he is a fool to hope it. If you are his friend tell him that the force of the curse is not spent so long as a de Beaugency treads the earth. So soon as he attempts to win back what the villany of his forefathers forfeited, so soon will the hand of the chosen minister of vengeance fall on him."

"I will tell him what you say," said Gilbert, humouring her mood; "but I know he is not the man to listen to such a warning. However, forewarned is forearmed, and if you could add one more detail to your disclosure, and send him the name of the chosen minister of vengeance, he might avert his danger by timely precautions."

"I cannot tell the name," she replied slowly; "and he cannot avert the danger. The doom must be fulfilled."

"Very tragical for my friend." And Monsieur Gilbert gave his head an incredulous shake. "And did you say, mademoiselle," he went on, turning to Jacqueline, "that my carter was your cousin?"

"Our fathers are cousins," answered Jacqueline blushing—a bright blush, which spread from her forehead to her throat.

"Ah, indeed!" continued Gilbert, in reply to the treacherous sign; "that's how it is, is it? Then we will make an exchange of warnings; you have given me one—for my friend; I, on my part, would recommend you, if you have any influence with this cousin, or interest in him, to give him a caution, which will perhaps come better from your lips than from mine. He is a good deal too prone to keep important business of mine waiting for the very insignificant purpose of refreshing himself too freely at any cabaret he may chance to pass as he drives along the way. If this continues, it may possibly lead to our parting company, which would doubtless be more troublesome to him than the exercise of a little more abstinence."

So saying, he lifted his hat again, thanked the old woman for her story, and went on his way before the blush had died out of Jacqueline's cheek.

"It is hard to hide a secret from eyes that have learnt to look beyond the grave," said Babette, when they were alone again.

"I have made no secret about Pierre," retorted the girl, flushing angrily.

"Who spoke of Pierre?" asked her grandmother. "It was of the olden time, and of the lords of the castle, we were speaking."

And then the customary silence settled on the group.

"Gilbert hasn't let the grass grow under his feet, has he? It's four months to-day since they began levelling and digging in my meadow, and now the factory is in full work. There ain't many men would have managed that in the time. No. Gilbert's a rare fellow to make things march."

It was Phillipou senior who issued this dictum to the villagers assembled in the bar-parlour of the "Repos des Voyageurs."

"Yes, and now the factory is working," said Martin, the sabotier, "will anyone tell me what it's working at, and what is the meaning of all the chestnut-wood that Gilbert is buying far and near in the mountain?"

"Yes!" chorused two or three others. "Why hasn't he set up a signboard to say what he's making? Come, Pierre Gannat, you ought to know something about it, you've been on the work from the beginning. What is the trade of this spry monsieur from Paris, and why does he make a secret of it?"

It was evening, and as Pierre's day's work was over, he had full right to be sitting as he was—stretched at ease on the most comfortable corner of the settle.

"How should I know more than another?" he returned grumpily. "All I know about Gilbert's business is that I have to cart wood for him and unload it. Seven times since Monday have I been over the mountain to Juillac; seven times have I loaded and unloaded as big a cart-load of wood as the beasts could drag. A man has not much time for prying into other people's business when he's kept hard at it like that."

"It's a little bit queer, ain't it?" resumed Phillipou père, "just to think he has thirty to forty men employed—men of the village, like Pierre, and men from Tulle—and not one of them knows what the work is nor what it is for. I've asked nearly all on 'em, and it isn't that they shut their mouths on what they know; it's plain they know nothing. They tell me there's sawing of wood and grinding through engines, and then comes a juice—a liquid, enfin, what you please to call it; then there's a boiling, and a cooking, and a cooling, and straining, and a running off into casks, and then they load it up on trucks, a dozen or more great tonneaux at a time, and send it off to the Gare d'Ivry, at Paris; but what it's good for, and who makes use of it, no one knows but Gilbert. There never was such a business done in these parts. I don't say it for myself; but some men might be vexed to have sold land to a man who can't or won't be open with his neighbours. I like Gilbert myself; he eats his dinner here regular and pays the same; but I should like to be told more about him."

"And why," suggested someone, "don't you ask him yourself, if he eats here every day?"

"I don't say but what I have," replied the innkeeper; "but I got nothing if I did. He's a shrewd one. I like the man; but he's mortal close."

"Well, I've got nothing against him, or his ways," said Auger, the baker. "He's put a livelihood in the way of more than

one, and he's bettered the sale of wood. Why, since he set up there's no need to take it all the way to Brive, and to stand haggling on the Place de l'Hospice till all's blue. My François said he shouldn't wonder if Gilbert's stuff isn't something to do with dyeing, because it colours their hands so. However, what does it matter what they make, so long as they earn good wages?"

"Good wages, indeed!" growled Pierre Gannat; "what's eighteen francs a week to such as me, when he's making a mint of money at our expense. He's come here because he wants wood, and he can get it, plenty and cheap, and he's set up his machinery where he hopes to keep it secret from them as knows as much as he does about his trade. If I had wood to sell I wouldn't let him have it at the price some fools have sold theirs. Gilbert shouldn't grow rich by me."

"Ah, you're set against him," said Phillipou loftily, "because he didn't buy your father's field instead of ours."

"That I'm not!" cried Pierre. "We'd rather keep the land we've had so long than sell it to such as him. What I say is, why—if there's money to be made out of chestnut wood—should Gilbert come and make it? Why shouldn't we use our own wood and make our own fortunes?"

"Gilbert would have to teach you a pretty lot more than your thick head would take in before you'd do that, Pierre Gannat," said Justin Phillipou with a sneer.

"Moreover," said the baker, who respected the mysteries of a trade, "you can't expect a man to tell his secrets. Gilbert has a secret. Let him keep it. We're none the poorer thereby."

"And as to you, Pierre Gannat," said Jacqueline's father, "you couldn't make a fortune nohow, you're too lazy. Hark to what you said about a tramp to Juillac. What's that to a man when he's hale and strong?"

"Oh, yes," cried Pierre, rounding sharply on the new speaker. "You've always got a word against me, ever since you saw how it was with Jacqueline."

"I speak of you as everyone else does, and if you think that a steady girl like Jacqueline would marry a vaurien——"

"She'd marry me to-morrow," interrupted Pierre stoutly, "if you would let her choose." Here Justin Phillipou shrugged his shoulders. "I'm as good as any other man, if I'm not well off. Why don't you let the girl choose for herself?"

"Nobody's interfered with the lass as far as I've ever seen," said old Phillipou.

"There's none so blind as those that won't see," retorted Pierre; "but perhaps you'll have your eyes opened for you yet. It's a long lane that hasn't a turn in it, and when Jacqueline's banns are cried, who knows what name will be put up along with hers?"

"Well, well," interposed the elder Gannat, "it ain't much use talking that over which has been settled already and elsewhere. It's just as likely that you'll find out Gilbert's secret, and build another factory by the river, and make him play second fiddle, as that you'll have anything to do with the crying of Jacqueline's banns."

"Why don't you marry the girl at once, then, and have the question settled?" (at the general assembly of the villagers, family affairs were very freely discussed), asked Gannat's next neighbour, in an undertone.

"She's over young yet," replied Gannat, "and she looks after her grandmother's mother, which the old lady won't want much longer. So Justin will have to wait, and Pierre will have to learn to take his disappointment without grumbling."

Monsieur Gilbert fully justified old Phillipou's description of him. He was a close man, and a busy one. This, he was thoroughly assured, was the only way to succeed in business. His discovery of a valuable dye which could be manufactured at a comparatively small cost in a rural district like Cornil, was not making his fortune with such fabulous rapidity as Pierre Gannat imagined, but he intended that it should enrich him before he was an old man. To make his fortune was but the first step in the career he had planned. Beyond this initial process lay a long vista, in which the enterprising, practical chemist, Louis Gilbert, should be a person of the past, the mere chrysalis from which had emerged Louis Gilbert de Beaugency, while the owner of the red-brick factory should have become the purchaser and restorer of his ruined ancestral home. The ground-plan of the castle in the air was mapped out in Gilbert's mind with characteristic precision, and, with its definite measurements and well-calculated difficulties, would have formed a fine contrast to the wild day-dream which burnt so fiercely in Pierre Gannat's brain, making him more reckless, more feverish, and more intemperate every day that he dreamt it.

No one who met the homely figure of Gilbert's carter, in his broad felt hat, his linen blouse, and his roomy breeches, trudging along the mountain roads in front of his oxen, would have suspected that he was the victim of disappointed affection. Under the broad hat was apparent nothing more romantic than a look of brooding ill-temper, and when his patient beasts stumbled, or otherwise failed in their duty, he gave vent to his feelings in language that augured ill for any woman who might be unhappy enough to call him lord and master.

But, unromantic as he looked, and small as was the sympathy which his outward semblance was capable of awakening, he was truly unhappy, and Jacqueline was seldom absent altogether from his thoughts. How could he forget her when he knew, from her own sweet lips, that whatever pretences her parents chose to make, and to whatever of these pretences she was obliged tacitly to submit, there was not, and never would be, any of her love to spare for Justin Phillipou.

Pierre knew that he was her one and only love; but all her parents heeded was that Phillipou was well-to-do, and that Justin's wife would be a person of importance in Cornil, while he, Pierre—luckless wight!—had learned no trade, but was obliged to earn miserable wages by drudging, in heat and cold, in rain and shine, over rough and smooth, for a man who was come thither to profit by such ignorance as his.

These thoughts concerning Jacqueline always led him thus to one haunting idea—why, if a man might grow rich by making a preparation from chestnut-wood, should this Parisian keep the secret all to himself?

The wood had grown on the mountain long before Gilbert came; he could not make his wealth without the aid of the men of Cornil, and Pierre easily persuaded himself that the chemist had no right to hide his secret, but ought to share it freely with those by whom he profited. There ought to be an equal chance for all to benefit by the natural resources of the country, and he was fully convinced that he and his fellow villagers were suffering a shameful injustice at the hands of this shrewd, taciturn interloper. Such bitter reflections as these required much drowning on his daily rounds, especially as he nursed them in silence—since no one else had the insight or courage necessary to sympathise with him.

And so it happened that one winter evening after nightfall, Pierre, who had been thinking and drinking a good deal during the day, was, consequently, sadly belated; and that Gilbert, on his way to dine at the "Repos des Voyageurs," was aware of the sound of wheels, and of a familiar surly voice in the darkness.

"That's you, Gannat, at last, is it?" he called out in a tone of sharp displeasure.

"And that's you, Gilbert, is it, too?" returned the other, evidently in no mood for contrition.

"Ah! it's clear enough what has kept you," said Gilbert angrily. "You've been drinking again."

"And if I have been drinking, mayn't a man be thirsty when he's tramped from Cornil to Aubazine, and from Aubazine to Lantreuil, and then back?"

"You are an insolent fellow, and I'm completely sick of the inconvenience you cause me."

"So am I sick of many things; and you had better get someone who will do more of your slavery for three francs a day."

"That's exactly what I mean to do. You can go down to the usine, unload that wood, which ought to have been in the mill at four this afternoon; take away all that belongs to you; and come to me to settle your wages to-morrow morning."

Pierre's answer to this was an unnecessarily sharp thrust to his oxen, and an oath as he proceeded on his way, while Gilbert went into the inn and sat down to dinner. He had been hungry a quarter of an hour before; but the dismissal of his carter, which would cause him some inconvenience, preoccupied him, and the man's vindictive insolence had annoyed him. After a hasty meal, he got up and walked down towards the factory. If Gannat had to be paid off he might as well do it forthwith, he said to himself, and so be free from the interruption in the morning.

Meanwhile, Gannat had driven his waggon into the yard in a frame of mind that told terribly on the hides of his beasts. He gave Causse, the watchman, a surly call as he passed the little watch-house by the gate.

"Hand out your lantern," he cried; "I'm going to do my last bit of work for Gilbert, and I'm in a hurry to get my supper."

Causse made haste to be obliging, his smoking soup was on the table, and he was also busy over the sale of a donkey. He gave no particular heed to Pierre's

announcement that he had received his congé.

As the cart rumbled across the yard, a sudden thought struck Gannat. He went back to the watchman.

"I want the key of the atelier," he said; "there's a blouse of mine in there."

"Can't it stop there till to-morrow?"

"No, it can't. But you needn't trouble to leave your soup; I can get it myself."

So Causse took down the key from its nail, and returned to his seat by the fire.

The atelier was at the further side of the yard, and out of it opened the room which Gilbert used as an office and laboratory. Gannat wondered why it had never occurred to him before that in that room must be some key to the mystery of the factory. He had been in the room often; he knew the exact position of everything—of the cases of chemicals, of the table, with its scales and retorts, of the bureau, and the piles of papers. The wine he had drunk and his encounter with his employer had irritated and excited him. The opportunity looked dazzlingly favourable. Causse would not notice how long he was in the yard, and in half an hour he could easily search a room so small as the office. In his elation he did not pause for a moment over two things which would have deterred him in a cooler moment—firstly, what he should look for; and, secondly, when he had perchance discovered the object of his search, whether he should be able to make head or tail of it.

The door leading from the atelier to the office was locked; but there were plenty of tools to be found, and there was no time to hesitate before trifles, such as a couple of bolts. In a few moments he stood in his employer's sanctum, and looked round it by the feeble light of the lantern.

It was all very confusing. There stood the chemicals, labelled with curious combinations of letters, reminding him of no words which came within the narrow horizon of his education. Here hung files of papers, here lay other papers covered in handwriting which would take him hours to decipher. He cursed Gilbert aloud for having made his bold attempt so difficult in effect. He rummaged hopelessly for a few moments, then growing desperate, he resolved to carry the whole mass of papers away. They would require long to investigate, unless, perhaps, he was very lucky. But long or short he would find the secret

out—that was his fixed determination. He would become as rich, not as Gilbert, but as Phillipou; and, then, Jacqueline. . . . It was an engrossing thought, it encouraged him as he huddled the papers, letters, bills, receipts, just as they lay, into a huge bundle, feeling like a man who is measuring his strength against the strength of destiny. It was no wonder he did not hear the sound of footsteps crossing the atelier. He only knew that he was no longer alone, when a hand was laid on his collar, and Gilbert's voice close to his ear, said:

"You blackguard! What do you mean by rifling my desk?"

For a moment Gannat's mind refused to grapple with the thought that he was interrupted, detected, ruined, disgraced for ever. His first complete idea was of Jacqueline. Jacqueline married to Phillipou, while he, her own love, was in prison. He burst into a wild laugh, and then a bitter fury seized him, a fury of all the envy, hatred, and malice that he had been nursing up so long. He threw himself on Gilbert with a suddenness for which the other was totally unprepared.

"If there isn't chestnut-wood enough for both of us, you shan't have your share either," he cried, as he twined his hard, muscular hands round Gilbert's throat.

It gave him a fierce, wild sense of pleasure to feel his victim writhe and struggle vainly for a few moments, and then sink inert and disfigured from the relaxed grip of his fingers.

"*Dieu du ciel, Pierre,*" cried the watchman as Gilbert's body fell at the feet of his assailant. "You have killed him." And he looked, bewildered, from the fierce pallor of the face opposite him to the blackened, swollen features on the floor. "I must do what I can for him, I suppose," he said, bending down over Gilbert's form, nor did he look up until he knew that the murderer had left him alone with the dead; it was not his business to arrest an old comrade, the agent de police might do his own work.

But when the hue-and-cry was raised, and when the country was searched high and low, the watchman's negligence was severely censured, for no trace was found of Pierre Gannat; he had disappeared as completely as the secret of Gilbert's wonderful dye had disappeared on the death of its discoverer. It, too, was sought for long among the papers which Pierre had tried to carry off; but the most careful investigation

by qualified persons made out nothing at all.

If, however, the chemist's secret died with him, the curiosity of the villagers was more than satisfied by the facts relating to him, which transpired during the investigation of the murder, and the winding up of the affairs of the factory. These facts stand recorded and summarised on a cross, in the little cemetery, which tells that below it rests Louis Gilbert de Beangency, the last claimant to the title of Marquis de Cornil, who had come back to the home of his forefathers to win back a lost inheritance.

For a little while longer old Babette used to sit on the sunny side of the ruins, crooning over the story of the old curse and its fulfilment.

"It was to be," she used to say. "It was to be. He was warned. It is Pierre that should be pitied, not the man who called himself Gilbert."

But Jacqueline was more to be pitied still, because, from day to day, she lives, half in hope, and half in dread, of some sign or word from the man she has loved always and will love to the last.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER XIII. A SPOILT CHILD.

"THAT evening—that was the last happy evening of my life," said Antoinette, long after to somebody who was very fond of her.

"Don't say that, dear," said her friend.

"I mean—till now," she said, and no one could be dissatisfied with the answer.

In those days no child of ten could be more thoroughly childish than she, though even then she had her full share of womanly good sense. And in after days, in hours that would have tried some natures sorely, she did not lose much of her child-likeness, or of her good sense; but then the possibilities of the future had not even occurred to her; when she left her reverend Mother that day, and came to La Tour Blanche with her father, it was all to her "the wild freshness of morning." Her father, Suzanne, and her old home; what more was wanted to make life perfect? That was, indeed, a happy evening, and

for a finishing touch, just at sunset, beautiful gleams of yellow light darted out from under the thick curtain of grey clouds, and laid soft shadows all about the old precincts of the château, and gave a topaz shine to the west windows of the tower. Mademoiselle Antoinette could have believed that they were lighted up from inside, as she saw them from the plantation below. Suzanne did not like her to say that, and crossed herself at the notion.

There was really a great deal to do that evening. She must just poke her head into every room in the house, however dark, damp, or unfurnished, to see whether there were any alterations; and she must go into the kitchen, where there were really a row of new copper pans, and some very nice bunches of herbs hanging up to dry, and a smiling young cook, imported from Saint Bernard for the occasion, and two or three old friends in sabots and blue gowns and cotton caps looking in with rugged old brown faces to see Mademoiselle. Then out at the back, where the grass grew long and wild in the old "plaisance," there were chickens and geese to be visited; and away along a shady walk there was Antoinette's own garden, which wanted so much digging and arranging that it must be put off till to-morrow. Then it was most necessary to inspect the chapel, which Suzanne had already decorated for mass to-morrow morning. In fact, all the young "châtelaine's" work was hardly done when it was time to brush her curls for dinner, and tie them round with a blue ribbon, and array her small person in a large white pinafore. Then she danced downstairs into the salon, sparkling with life and beauty and fun, to join her father, who had been inspecting on his own account; and together they went into the brown polished dining-room, where the little cook from Saint Bernard sent them in a dinner worthy of Paris, and old Pierre waited on them, very much to his own satisfaction. If Antoinette had not been quite so happy herself, she might have noticed that her father was a little silent; but that evening nothing troubled her. Suzanne had something serious to say to Pierre in the pantry, when she was helping him to put the things away after dinner.

"My friend," said she, "I was down in the new wood with Mademoiselle this evening, and the windows of the apartment of Madame la Marquise were illuminated."

"What are you talking about?" said Pierre, contemptuously.

"You laugh, and you tell me it is the sun, no doubt; men like you always do. The child said they looked as if they were lighted from inside, and so they did. And you won't pretend to forget when they were lighted up inside, and you and I saw them from the end of the avenue, when we had run down to look at the triumphal arch. And we had only just time to get back, to receive our young mistress, and all her windows were lighted up to welcome her. Fifteen years ago, Master Pierre. We were younger then than we are now, and I had not committed the foolishness of marrying you."

"Bah! what does the woman mean!" Pierre tried to keep up his scornful airs, but failed a little before the solemn sincerity of his wife's eyes. "Well, well," he said, "I suppose you take it for a sign, do you, that Monsieur le Marquis is going to be married again."

"Ciel! Don't talk so loud."

"I'm whispering. Well—and if he is?"

"Mon Dieu! you don't think it likely, do you?"

"Stranger things might happen," said Pierre, with the air of an oracle. "I may tell you, I needed no illumination to put it into my head. He has been walking all over the place, and finding fault with things he never noticed before. Pommard told me so. He is either going to marry or to sell the place."

"Sell it! Impossible!"

"Va!" said Pierre. "Has that woman made the coffee?"

Under the great chimney of the salon a fire of logs was flaming; in the uncertain light of this and of one dim lamp, the bare old room looked its best. The Marquis and his little daughter sat opposite to each other in two high arm-chairs beside the fire; here and there above their heads a point of colour or tarnished gilding shone out from the tall emblazoned chimney-piece. All the ceiling was crossed by dark painted beams; the walls also were painted and hung with a few dismal old pictures; and by this light one did not see the yawning cracks and blisters in the faded paint, or the great damp stains on the wall.

M. de Montmirail was trying to read the "Gaulois" by the combined light of fire and lamp, which shone very becomingly on his handsome fair head,

but was hardly satisfactory in the matter of reading.

Antoinette sat smiling and looking about her. The chair was much too high for her, and her little feet were cocked up on a footstool; she looked at them, then at the fire, then round the room, and then settled down into a prolonged gaze at her father, who presently threw the paper aside with an impatient exclamation.

"Pierre might have done something better for us in the way of light," he said.

"Never mind, papa: talk to me," said Antoinette.

"What do you want to talk about, chatterbox? You look very dignified in that large chair. Madame de Cernay will be quite impressed, if you sit up like that to entertain her to-morrow."

"I don't think I care for Madame de Cernay. Not passionately at least."

"Not passionately," he repeated, smiling. "Who cares passionately for anybody or anything? Not you or I. You need not use such strong words, 'petite.'"

"Pardon!" said Antoinette, quickly. "I care passionately for this place, and for you, and for living here with you. The word is not too strong for me. To me it is 'ravissant, ravissant' to the very utmost height, to sit here in this chair and see you in that one. It is all in life that is most exquisite."

"Merci, petite," he said smiling, and very gently; but there was some shadow of trouble in his eyes.

"Yes, an evening like this is all right, it is perfection, it is what ought always to be," the girl went on. "Do you know, papa, once upon a time I had a great fear."

"What was it?" he asked, looking up quickly.

"Don't be frightened, dearest," she said. "It is long ago now. It was when you were staying in England with our cousins. You said in your letters that you liked England so much, and all the people there. I was afraid that you would wish to live in England; and I told grandmamma, and she was a little afraid too. But she said England was really so terrible that she could not believe it; only, to be sure, she thought that you had little eccentric fancies sometimes, dear papa."

"It is a charming country, and I met charming people there," said the Marquis. "I should like to take you there some day for a visit. You can talk English a little,

and Lady Lefroy would be very kind to you. But as to living there; no, one is best in one's own country."

"Do you remember the little Englishman whose name was Romaine, who spent Sunday with you on a hill?"

The Marquis laughed. "Of course I remember him. He was a very nice fellow. But why do you call him 'little?' He was nearly as tall as I am."

"Is it possible? Grandmamma and I made a picture of you walking side by side, and he was very much the smaller."

"You never showed me that work of art, or I could have corrected you."

"It was not worth while. Will you ask that Englishman to stay with you, when the house is restored, and we are living here together?"

"Why? Do you want to see him?"

"Of course I want to see him. I want to like everybody you like. And I think we agree very well, for I know you like M. de Cernay better than Madame, just as I do. And I can never go to England, because of that dreadful sea. Oh, I should die of fear!"

"Let us hope that some day you will find a little courage," said M. de Montmirail.

He was certainly unlike himself that evening, a little disturbed from his usual frank placidity. His talk with Antoinette had lost something of its old intimate charm; the touch of perfect sympathy and mutual understanding was somehow absent, though she was not aware of it: she idolised him far too thoroughly to be critical.

He presently got up, and walked along the room two or three times, from the door into the hall, to the door into the dining-room. Antoinette watched him silently for a minute or two, and then sprang from her chair and joined him.

"Why do you march up and down?" she said, "and what are you thinking about? I must march with you, and you must tell me."

Achille smiled, and took one more turn with the small hand in his arm. He could not tell her of what he was thinking; no, not that evening: every word the child said made it harder.

"Come, let us play a game of tric-trac," he said. "And then, Mademoiselle, you must go to bed. What will your grandmother say if you don't have your proper sleep at La Tour Blanche? And she will find it out at the first glance. As for me, I shall never hear the end of it."

It was the custom at La Tour Blanche for the Curé of the village to celebrate mass, once a year, in the chapel at the château; the day was a day in November, the anniversary of the last Marquis's death. It was, therefore, with this service for the repose of her grandfather's soul that little Antoinette de Montmirail began the next day.

Her father made a point of being there every year, and she had often been with him, but never, she thought, had the solemnity of the service been so real to her as on that morning. Her father was always a good man, and a good Catholic; perhaps it was because she was older, and more able to understand things, but she felt that day, as she knelt beside him, as if his devotion were deeper than she had ever known it before. It was, indeed, happiness to kneel beside him, even at such a sad service as this; to feel that she belonged to him just as he belonged to the dear grandfather who was dead.

People who were at all particular in religion might have been distressed by the rough, inharmonious tones of the good Curé's voice, which suited ill with his vestments of black velvet and silver lace. The blue blouse and corduroy trousers of his acolyte were also a little out of keeping; but neither M. de Montmirail, his daughter, nor the servants who knelt behind them in the little, vaulted chapel, were disposed to be at all critical on these subjects. Their religion was too much a part of their life to be the least troublesome, or anything but simple.

The mass was said, the duty was done, and that was enough for them. And all the time, a background to the Curé's chanting, a thick, dark November rain descended steadily, running in a stream down the stone steps outside, and making its way to lie in little pools under the rugged old chapel door.

When mass was over, Mademoiselle Antoinette darted across the archway and danced into the kitchen, where Suzanne made her sit down by the stove and took her wet shoes off. Several attractive pots were stewing on the stove, with a view to the breakfast of Monsieur and Mademoiselle, also of Monsieur le Curé, and of Monsieur and Madame de Cernay—if the day were not too wet for them.

In the meanwhile the Curé, who had tucked up his "soutane," and carried a large umbrella, was talking to M. de Montmirail over a comfortable blaze in the

salon. The cracked and discoloured paint, the damp with which the walls were stained, the rickety windows, the faded, heavy, ugly furniture, the absence of curtains, portières, tapestries, comfort or luxury of any kind, were all far more sadly conspicuous now than in the evening; and Madame de Cernay, who drove up cheerfully with her husband in a small omnibus through all the rain, threw up her hands and screamed with laughter when M. de Montmirail smilingly welcomed her to his ruin.

"Ruin indeed, my dear Marquis!" she cried. "We must take this into our calculations very carefully."

But if Madame de Cernay was uncomplimentary towards the old house, she took a very different tone with regard to Antoinette, who had grown to perfection since she last saw her. "Ma belle—mon ange," were amongst her mildest expressions; and the child thus treated began to think that, after all, Madame de Cernay was very agreeable. No wonder that everyone thought and said so.

"At least," said Antoinette afterwards, "I liked her when she was there, praising me. But when she was gone, I did not much like to think about her."

Antoinette was all smiles, though she did not talk much in the presence of these grown-up visitors. Madame de Cernay did most of the talking at breakfast, though the Curé made manful efforts to take his share, and argued with her on every subject. She was a fine, pleasant-looking woman, tall, and large, with a pretty complexion; altogether she and her ugly little husband were curiously matched, except in their manners, both being very demonstrative and very noisy. They and his other friends often accused Achille de Montmirail of being as quiet as an Englishman.

After breakfast the rain went on pouring in steady sheets. M. le Curé again tucked up his "soutane," and started off down the avenue with his large umbrella. M. de Montmirail and his friend went to smoke in the library, a dilapidated old room in the west tower. Before M. de Cernay left the salon, he made all sorts of telegraphic signs to his wife, who responded in the same way. Antoinette could hardly help laughing; the dear Baron looked so very like a monkey.

Pierre came in with a fresh log for the fire, which blazed cheerfully up the wide chimney. Madame de Cernay sat in the

large arm-chair where M. de Montmirail had sat last night, put her feet on a foot-stool, and held up the "Gaulois" carefully for a screen, as there were no screens in this half-furnished old house.

"Now, Antoinette, entertain me, amuse me, my sweet child," she said. "Your poor little Curé prosés terribly; he thinks himself as wise as Solomon. Don't sit there, my angel, you will burn your cheeks," as Antoinette sat down in front of the fire.

She could not exactly place herself in the large chair opposite to Madame la Baronne. So, after a moment's thought, Antoinette fetched another, high-backed and very uncomfortable, and placed it a little way off, where she would both show proper politeness and preserve her complexion.

"Amuse me," said Madame de Cernay again; and her eyes wandered round the room with a considering look.

"Shall I tell you about the Convent, madame?" said Antoinette. "I made papa laugh yesterday with some of my stories."

"Ah, no, no!" said Madame de Cernay. "No doubt the Convent is entrancing, and you are all very good there. When I was at the Convent I was very wicked. I could tell you stories, but I won't, so don't ask me. I don't want to hear about other people, my little angel, but about yourself. You are growing up now, and you must have a great many wishes. Tell me all about them."

Antoinette folded her arms and looked grave.

Madame de Cernay sincerely thought that it was a very sweet and pretty little face—only a shade too earnest, perhaps: the girl might be inclined to take life too seriously. That was a fault of dear Achille, in spite of all his sweet temper and easy good-nature.

It appeared that Antoinette had not many wishes. They all resolved themselves into two; that La Tour Blanche might be restored, and that she might live there with her father.

"Ah, mon Dieu! I never heard anything more excellent," cried Madame de Cernay, in high approval. "And does your dear father know of these pretty little wishes? Because I feel sure that they must charm him beyond everything."

"Oh, yes, madame. He has known for a long time, and we were talking about them again yesterday."

"Charming, charming!"

"Oh, yes, one can make the most glorious plans. Only one must be reasonable," said Antoinette with a little sigh. "Where is the money to come from? Papa is not rich enough to restore the château, and he does not think we can live here as it is—though I do. Yesterday he talked about selling it, which would break all our hearts."

"Of course it would," said the Baronne, staring at her and nodding. "No, no, he will never sell it. He will do something much pleasanter for everybody. Did he talk of any other plan?"

"He said there might be a way. I did not know what he meant. He said, perhaps he would tell me to-day."

"Ah! He thought you were old enough to keep a secret, did he? Bien, ma belle! I think so too."

"What secret, madame?" Antoinette opened her large eyes very wide, and the colour rose in her cheeks. Suddenly she knew that something was going to happen, something that would change her life—and yet, what could it be? Was it happiness or sorrow? Madame de Cernay was laughing; but she laughed at everything. At that moment something forced into Antoinette's mind the consciousness that her father had been a little mysterious yesterday and this morning; her father, who was generally as open as the day. What could be going to happen? Was he going away anywhere to make his fortune? Had he got some appointment somewhere? Would she be separated from him, perhaps for years? Had he brought her here to say good-bye to the old home, till he could come back again with money enough to restore it?

"Oh, he is going away!" she cried in shrill agony, clasping her hands together. "Oh no, let him sell it to Monsieur Chocolat. That would be better than going away. Madame, you will let me go and tell him so. He is doing it for me, and I would rather die than lose him."

"Stop! stay here, my child!" exclaimed Madame de Cernay. "You are talking like a little mad woman. Who said a word about your father's going away? He is going nowhere but to Paris, as far as I know; and he will take you with him."

Antoinette sat down again, comforted for the moment. But she watched the Baronne with a sort of nervous anxiety, and the happy child-look had vanished from her face. "I thought he was going away to get some money," she murmured.

"No, no," said Madame de Cernay, smiling. "His friends have thought of a better plan than that; and I hope his charming little daughter will be too reasonable to set herself against it. It will be as good for her as for him. She will have a happy, beautiful home, and a friend who will love her, and take her out into the world, and arrange her dress, and in fact give the dear child everything that she wants to make life perfect. She loves her father, and she will see him entirely happy with a companion who will adore him, and with a fortune to do anything he pleases to the old Tour Blanche. It will be one of these days the most beautiful house in the neighbourhood, and no doubt the most agreeable, as Mademoiselle de Montmirail grows up."

Madame de Cernay went on very agreeably with her oration thus far. She leaned back in her chair, gently waving her newspaper screen, and, being satisfied that she was breaking the news for M. de Montmirail with the most considerate tenderness, she let her eyes wander round the room as she talked. But presently they fell on the child's face, and she stopped suddenly.

"Mon Dieu, Antoinette! What is the matter?" she cried. Antoinette was deadly pale: even her lips were white, and she was struggling to speak. At first, she could hardly utter a sound; then she screamed out, "Papa!" and the shrill agonised cry must have pierced through walls and doors, for he came hurriedly into the room a moment afterwards, and the child flung herself into his arms in a wild passion of crying. With many caressing words he lifted her up, and absolutely carried her away, leaving Monsieur and Madame de Cernay to express their sentiments to each other.

These sentiments were hardly well defined at once; but they found a very decided voice later, when the Marquis's two friends were driving back in their omnibus to Saint Bernard through the still pouring rain.

"I certainly would not be her step-mother, the spoilt child!" cried Madame de Cernay, with shrieks of laughter.

"She has gained her point; she will not have a stepmother at all," said the Baron.

"I call his weakness scandalous. Did you understand? He wishes to put an end at once to all negotiations; says that his chief object was the good of his child, and that he will not make her miserable. On my faith, that child has something to answer for. He is too amiable, that dear Achilles; absolutely soft, ridiculous, insane, absurd. To let the fancies of a child overturn family arrangements in that sort of way! Better marry ten wives than make oneself a slave to a girl of fourteen. Good Heavens! that a friend of mine should be such a fool!"

M. de Cernay gnashed his teeth, clenched his fist, and thumped on the cushion.

"Well, our little plan is spoilt, that is all," said his wife, "for my aunt had a better match in view for Béatrice, and only listened to this to please me. Well, we shall see. Madame the mother-in-law may interfere, and bring 'la petite' to her senses. I know she wishes for more money in the family. It is a joke, indeed, if a poor man can't marry again, because his little daughter says no."

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"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XIII. MAY HAS A HOLIDAY.

MEANWHILE, that "propinquity," which, according to Johnson, is enough of itself to generate love, was working with full and fell effect upon the susceptible heart of Gower. He was deliriously in love and lived only in thoughts of May in her absence, and in her smiles when with her. Of Mrs. Beresford's encouragement he had no doubt, and he had little doubt of the good Vicar's; but of May's he had deepening doubts. Her frank, collected, and playful manner was not now, even in Gower's eyes, the manner of a maiden in love. Certainly she liked him, but did she love him? He dared not yet ask May. If only he knew how he stood with her!

If only he did! If only he heard May's conversations about him with her father!

"Father, I wish you'd take him to-day; it's your week for the funerals," May urged aggrievedly, in allusion to the arrangement by which her father and Mr. Spratt took "the surplice duty" week about.

The Vicar laughed.

"Do you find him so depressing?" he asked.

"We haven't an idea in common," she groaned in unaffected weariness.

"You mean that he hasn't half a one in his head to contribute? Well, he isn't a genius, certainly; but he seems good-natured enough."

"Yes, he's good-natured, and good-tempered, and amiable—like Mr. Spratt."

"My dear May!" exclaimed her father, "what has he done?"

But he soon perceived that May had a serious reason for the request, and was at no loss either to guess what it was. Mrs. Beresford, indeed, in the exuberance of her triumph at the success of her match-making plans, had hinted to him pretty plainly that a proposal was imminent—a suggestion which the Vicar pooh-poohed as preposterous. But May's serious anxiety to be rid of the youth convinced the Vicar that there was something in this suggestion of his wife.

"It's easy to say 'take him,' but he won't follow me," he said. "It is like Fred to get even his hospitality done for him," he added with clouded brow, as having graver reasons than this for his irritation against Fred.

"He could hardly have helped asking him, and he couldn't know that he would have to be away himself," May replied with her usual eagerness to take up arms for Fred.

"Well, dear, I hope Mr. Gower is the only trouble he's brought upon us," her father answered with a smile and a sigh—the smile being assumed and the sigh sincere. "What have you done with him?"

"I sent him into the village, but he'll be back presently."

"I had better go and meet him."

"It's no good meeting misfortunes half-way," May answered smiling; "but you might carry him off when he comes back. I really must go to the schools to-day."

"I shall bore him to death."

"Oh, well, he'll have his revenge," she rejoined with a touch almost of acrimony in her tone.

In truth May had been joked so about Mr. Gower in the village, and indirectly instructed about him by her mother, that she had her eyes well opened to the mean-

ing of the young gentleman's later manner, which, indeed, was marked enough. Now while he was to her only Fred's friend, she could endure the dreary day-long drizzle of his dulness; but in this new light of a lover his complacent silliness was intolerable. Besides, she had come, not without good reason, to think a proposal possible, and this she must ward off in all ways.

But, unfortunately, her sudden distance of manner, and her new avoidance of Gower were in some moods interpreted by him in an opposite sense—as either the shyness or the coquetry of conscious love. To-day, for instance, being in better spirits, he was disposed so to interpret them; and while May was arranging with her father for his being taken off her hands, he was rehearsing to himself a proposal he had at last resolved upon. Hurrying back to find an immediate opportunity for making it, he was met in the hall by the Vicar, who carried him off helplessly to Leeds. But again, this move of the Vicar's had the opposite of its intended effect. Gower, bent and drawn back like a bow, waited now only the moment of his release to let loose his pent-up passion, and came to prize his opportunities in proportion to their growing scarceness.

Meanwhile, he was carried off a victim by the victimised Vicar; for it was hard to say which of the two was the more uncomfortable in the companionship of the other. The Vicar's discomfort, however, was purely unselfish and hospitable, arising from a consciousness of boredom of his guest by himself, not of himself by his guest.

"You ought to do Leeds for the same reason that Tom Sheridan did a coal-pit—to be able to say he had done it. And, indeed, when you've done Leeds, you might say you had done a coal-pit, without much strain on your conscience."

"Is it so black, sir?" asked the hapless youth, in the hope of some excuse for escape.

"Nearly; it is just 'darkness visible.' It's down in such a hole that the smoke can't get away."

"Have you to go there to-day, sir?"

"Not particularly; but you ought to see it, as you haven't seen a coal-pit."

"But I couldn't think of taking you there; and, besides, I would rather——"

"I assure you it's not the least trouble," the Vicar hastened to say, "and I should like to show you the fine old parish church, and a factory or two."

"But I've done one," gasped Gower, with a dread recollection of Sugden's.

"Not an iron factory, not a forge. You really must see Jeffrey's great iron and engine works. You couldn't leave the North without seeing them; it would be like leaving Rome without seeing St. Peter's."

Leaving Doncaster on the eve of the St. Leger would have been a much more effective illustration to Gower's ears; but even the St. Leger would not have drawn him to-day, voluntarily, from May's side; and yet he has to go down into this Stygian hole!

The hapless Vicar tried in turn, and in vain, every subject, and had, at last, to give up the attempt at conversation in despair. The only thing wherein Gower showed the least interest during the day, was his own weight, which, according to the scales in Jeffrey's foundry, was less by nearly a pound than what it had been a month since in Cambridge.

This seemed greatly to exercise him, and he recurred to it more than once during the Vicar's irrelevant expositions of the might of Nasmyth hammers, or of the beauty of old stained glass. Indeed, this loss of weight was the sole impression he brought back with him from Leeds.

Altogether, so May said, Mr. Gower had his revenge; for the boredom he inflicted was as much deeper than that he endured, as the Vicar's hospitable eagerness to please was greater than his guest's complaisance. There was just one lucid interval in the day—dinner-time—during which Gower, being sumptuously entertained at the "Victoria," recovered his amiability and spirits.

He went so far even as to admit, over his port, that "he supposed there must be such places as Leeds."

"Yes," replied the Vicar, laughing. "If we hadn't such places we couldn't grow merchant-princes, or even lilies of the field, like yourself."

"I don't think any of my people were ever in trade," Gower answered, with an eye to impressing his prospective father-in-law with the grandeur of his house.

"You sell sheep and cows, I suppose, and, perhaps, pheasants and partridges, eh? And you wouldn't make much by them if there were no such swarming hives as Leeds."

From this conversation the sagacious Gower inferred that the Vicar was levelling him down to his daughter in prospect of the

approaching proposal! Cunning folk, like owls, accustomed to look always for vermin in darkness, are wide and wild in their aim in broad, downright daylight; and Gower was just the man to misunderstand the motives of so transparent a person as our Vicar.

"It doesn't matter so long as a man's a gentleman," he said, as though making a concession to the Vicar, who, by the way, was of a much older and higher family than himself.

"It depends on what you mean by a gentleman," replied the Vicar, conscious of a suspicion of patronage in the youth's tone, "whether you mean a gentleman by birth or by position, or in manners, or in mind. The last is the gold; and the rest only 'the guinea's stamp,' or worthless paper money."

"I meant all of them together."

"You don't often find them all together," rejoined the Vicar, "or often find the last of them at all; but when you do find it, the rest doesn't matter much, as you say."

Though Gower had by no means said this, or meant it, he accepted the credit of it complacently.

"But here, in the West Riding," continued the Vicar, "'a gentleman' has another meaning altogether, and is defined as you would define a tramp, as 'a man who has nothing to do.' What a satire on the gentry!"

"Not many of that sort in these parts, I fancy," Gower replied with a shuddering recollection of toil as ceaseless, grimy, and monotonous as that of their Sisyphean steam engines!

"No; they don't believe here in Aristotle's 'the end of labour is to give leisure,' but consider work, merely as work, virtuous in itself."

But the mere mention of Aristotle was enough to silence Gower, who relapsed forthwith into his former gloom. He took interest henceforth in nothing till they regained Hammersley station, where he had himself reweighed on the company's spring balance, which registered him nearly a pound heavier than he had been a month since in Cambridge! The Vicar suggested that the Leeds smoke which, on the principle of the Montgolfier balloon, would naturally levitate him, accounted for the two pounds' discrepancy; but to Gower, the matter seemed much too serious for a jest. He had got some theory into his head about the proper proportion of

weight to height, which he expounded with much earnestness to the Vicar.

Altogether the victimised Vicar felt as weary of his day as though he had been playing lawn-tennis for eight hours with a man who never returned him a single ball. There was no subject which he had not started and which had not fallen forthwith dead to the ground. He was, of course, conscious that men of his age were not in touch with lads of the age of Gower; but in his long and varied experience of such youths, he had never before met one with whom he could not hit upon a single subject of mutual interest. Yet to such a youth his wife would have been rejoiced to bind her daughter for life! Thinking much of the extraordinary sophistication of women's minds in such matters, he congratulated himself that May at least had not learned to value a man by his mere tinsel wrappings.

As he entered the Vicarage drawing-room he asked the question that Gower's eyes had asked already:

"Where's May?"

"She's gone to the choir rehearsal. She would go," answered Mrs. Beresford querulously.

"Enoch asked her, probably, as Spratt has given them up in disgust," the Vicar suggested.

"He'd better give up his curacy if he gives up his work," retorted Mrs. Beresford.

"He's only bound to listen to them on Sundays and festivals; and quite enough, too."

"You know very well, George, it's not that—but some nonsense about women being out of place in a choir."

"'In the sanctuary,' my dear, 'in the sanctuary.' I suppose he thinks, like Saint Kevin, there ought to be sanctuary somewhere from you."

"She thought she would have been back before you returned," Mrs. Beresford said. "She's later to-night than usual, though she knows I don't like her coming back alone at this hour," she added, with a glance at Gower.

"If you would allow me to go for her, I should be only too happy to escort her," Gower cried eagerly.

Mrs. Beresford of course assented, while the Vicar dared not dissent.

CHAPTER XIV. THE REHEARSAL.

MAY'S main motive in attending the choir rehearsal was escape from Gower; but

she had also in her mind the motive suggested by her father—the conciliation of Enoch Lumb, the choir master, one of her dearest, worthiest, and kindest village friends.

Mr. Spratt's Popish proposal to exclude women from the choir shook Enoch's faith to its foundations; for, to his thinking, as the essential difference between the Church of England and Dissent was the Anglican choral service, so the essential difference between the Churches of England and of Rome was the admission of women into the choir. In truth, Enoch, like many West Riding folk, was music mad, and considered all the machinery of the Church of England as little more than the mere bellows to the organ of her choral service. Her choral service, again, meant to him mainly the singing of his favourite pupil, Phoebe Ann, a girl of only thirteen, with a very sweet, true, and pure voice—what there was of it. Of course, at her age, there was so little of it that her singing seemed sometimes like the music of the spheres, exquisite, but inaudible, to everyone except Enoch, who sincerely believed it to be the soul of the choir.

If, then, her choral service was the soul of the Church of England, and if the soul of Hammersley choral service was the voice of Phoebe Ann, what a heretic did Mr. Spratt appear to Enoch, when he proposed the exclusion of Phoebe Ann from the choir! The old man did well to be angry.

"Spratt cannot bide to think folk coom for owt nobbut to hearken him praich," he said, in indignant explanation of this attempt to eliminate Phoebe Ann from the attractions of the church. "He'd have it all to hissen if he could; an' so he wad, aw reckon, if there wor nobbut his praiching to hearken to."

Perhaps, the oddest thing about Enoch's delusion was that the first and last thing he valued in a voice was power; and no one was more critical and caustic than he, about the lack of this essential vocal quality in anyone except his favourite pupil. When Reuben Rairstow, who had really a delicious tenor voice, sang "Comfort ye" at "the Anniversary," everyone but Enoch was in raptures.

"Nay," he said, when asked confidently "what did yo' think by that voice, Enoch?" "Nay, aw ne'er heard it; aw sat at far end o' t' church, tha knaws."

Yet, when Phoebe Ann was piping some solo (all possible solos were given to her),

in her little linnet-like voice, Enoch would hurry down to sit at the far end of the church all ear, as if he—

Took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death.

Whereas he really needed to be all ear to catch her voice at all.

Yet, though he gave Phoebe Ann all possible solos, and would have made the very "amens" solos for her, if he could; still such was his tact and cleverness that he managed to get, and keep together, a respectable choir—a remarkable achievement when the professional jealousy of singers is considered, together with Enoch's favouritism and caustic criticism.

Enoch's admiration of May amounted to worship almost, and was, indeed, so deep that he would admit her voice to be finer than Phoebe Ann's. He would hardly have made even this admission—though May's voice was as strong as it was sweet—if she had been in the choir; but, as she was outside all competitions for solos, Enoch conceded to her the palm. He would even at rehearsals pose her as Phoebe Ann's model, by setting May to sing the solo first, much to her confusion and discomfort.

On entering the schoolroom this evening—for Mr. Spratt had relegated rehearsals to the schoolroom to save the church the desecration of Enoch's dry humour and the laughter it occasioned—May found Phoebe Ann standing forward waiting for the cue of the harmonium symphony to begin her solo.

"Soft, lass, soft!" Enoch cried earnestly, as a premonitory caution, as though Phoebe Ann were given to shaking the roof with her reedy trill. "Soft, lass, soft!"

But when Phoebe Ann, seeing May enter, remained silent altogether, Enoch said, in his dry way:

"Nay, that's soft eneu anyway, lass."

"Miss Beresford," Phoebe Ann answered in explanation; whereupon Enoch turned to see and welcome May.

"Nay, Miss May!" he cried with heartfelt pleasure. "Aw'm fain to see thee, aw ham that. Mr. Spratt has g'ven us t'sack thro' church o' practice neets, an' reckons to sack us thro' sarvices an' all. He braids o' a cock that can ne'er bide to hear another crow i' t'same yard—"

"It is not that, Enoch; but he likes a surplised choir."

Enoch smiled at May's innocence. As, however, he could not in Phoebe Ann's

* "Braids o'," i.e. is like.

presence enlighten May as to Mr. Spratt's real motive, he said only :

"Nay, a surplised choir! Who's to tuse* wi' t'boys? A boy's voice braids o' a bird's egg; it's no sooiner hatched nor it's cracked. Aw'm noan bother w boys, while aw can get lasses wi' voices that hold aht as long as you need 'em."

"But Mr. Spratt has given up all thoughts of a surplised choir, Enoch."

"Ay, as aw've gi'en up all thowt o' Parleement," rejoined Enoch. "We could do wi' a surplice less, aw reckon, i't church, i' place of a score moer on 'em," he added, with some bitterness, for Mr. Spratt had become altogether abominable to him.

May was a good deal shocked by the example of dislike and contempt of Mr. Spratt which Enoch was setting the choir; as, however, the old man was a chartered libertine in his tongue, and intended, and was taken to, mean much less than he said, she merely hastened to turn the conversation.

"I'm afraid I interrupted Phœbe Ann," she said.

"Nay, yo've just coomed i' time to gi'e her a leason—gi'e Miss May t' music, lass," he turned to say to Phœbe Ann.

It was vain for May to protest, as Enoch was bent upon paying her this extravagant compliment in the presence of the choir; so she took the music, while Enoch hurried to the other end of the room to hear her to the greatest advantage. Here he listened with ears, eyes, and mouth (for he enjoyed singing, and especially her singing, intensely), while he kept time unconsciously with head, hands, and feet. But just in the very middle of the solo, he shouted, "Stop!" May stopped dead, thinking she had made some terrible blunder.

"Aw beg your pardon, Miss May; but you're makkin' sich an a din that aw can noane hear what Frances Ann Greenough is saying."

The hapless Frances Ann, who had been seen by Enoch to whisper something to her neighbour, was overwhelmed by so sarcastic a rebuke.

"What is it, lass? Spak' up!" After a silence that might be felt of a second or two, Enoch added coolly: "Yo' mun forgi'e me, Miss May, but aw thowt it wor sommut that wadn't wait whiles tha'd finished. Tak' it thro'—He leadeat me,"

agin, Fred," he said to the youth who was playing the harmonium; and from this passage May meekly recommenced, feeling not in the least offended, but exceedingly sorry for the crushed Frances Ann.

When the solo ceased, and the chorus came in, Enoch beat time with a big Prayer-Book upon a school-desk; and at the close he said, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow :

"We mun tak' that o'er agin wi' a bit moer sperrit, and wakken Silas theer, who's snorin' i' place o' singin'. When aw wor thee age, lad, aw pumped t'Hallelujahs while t' sweet fair pahred dahn me, aw did. Singin' wor singin' then, yo' mind, an' noan t' smoo'ered grant an' squeak of a pig i' a poke—or i' a surplice, aither," he added, as another cut at Mr. Spratt's heresy. "Nah, lass, it's thee benefit," he said, turning to Phœbe Ann, who, being a shy girl, and modest withal—in spite of Enoch's extravagant opinion of her—sang with tremulous nervousness through her consciousness of eclipse by May. Nevertheless, Enoch hung upon her lips with a rapt attention which only a very cynical musician would have had the heart to smile at. "Nay, lass, yo mun let it goa, an' noan keep it shut up an' flutterin' like a bird i' a basket," he said in allusion to Phœbe Ann's timid "tremolo." "Shoo's flayed on* thee, miss," he whispered aside to May.

But Phœbe Ann was "flayed on" more than May at that moment, for the sudden flutter and failure of her voice were due to the appearance of Gower. As only May and Enoch had their backs to him, he stood at the door shamefaced, in full view of Phœbe Ann and the choir, conscious of the inevitable construction they would put upon this dog-like attendance on May.

Indeed, he had the precise blinking, half-averted, mortified look of a dog which its child owner has just decorated with a ribbon, as a symbol of ownership. There is nothing more difficult than for a shy man to wear the yoke of love, when first imposed, without showing a self-conscious and sheepish desire to hide himself from the ridicule of his fellows. But with the whole choir grinning in unison, so shy a youth as Gower felt and looked absurdly self-conscious and sheepish.

May, turning to follow the broad track of this grin, was mortified beyond measure

* "Tue," i.e. bother with.

* "Flayed on," i.e. afraid of.

at sight of Gower. She had been rallied for days past about Gower by the whole parish in a manner as light and graceful as the tread of a hippopotamus upon a sensitive plant, and here was an advertisement to the whole parish of what it had rallied her upon!

She reddened to the roots of her hair with shame and vexation, and marched down to the door with as much stateliness and deliberation as she could assume, while conscious of every eye and ear behind her being strained to take in the interview.

"What is it, Mr. Gower? Has Fred come?"

"No; but Mrs. Beresford wished me to escort you home," Gower stammered, for May's manner was by no means encouraging, while the audience of the chorus was embarrassing in the extreme.

"Escort me? But I do not need an escort, I assure you; besides, I am not going home for some time yet, as the rehearsal is not nearly over," May said weakly, for it is always feeble and ineffective to assign two reasons—the second being a virtual admission either of the insincerity or of the inadequacy of the first.

"But I should like very much to hear the rehearsal if you'll allow me to stay," he pleaded almost beseechingly.

"I wish you would if you don't mind," May rejoined with unlooked-for alacrity.

"Mind! I should like it greatly, if I'm not in the way," he rejoined eagerly.

"Oh, I'm sure Mr. Lumb won't mind. Mr. Gower has come down to hear the rehearsal, Enoch, if you will let him."

"He's lat' aw reckon, unless tha'll tak' solo ovver agin," replied Enoch dryly.

May smiled and shook her head.

"I have to go and see a sick child—Mrs. Lightowler's, you know. Good-night," she said to the choir, and, under cover of their chorussed reply "Gooid-night, miss," she said to Gower, "Your staying to hear them will gratify them greatly."

Before he could reply she was gone.

Gower felt not only ill-used, but angry, and yet more in love with May than ever! However, it was not possible for him to follow her, or even to escape to the Vicarage, after what had been said; so he stayed with sullen resignation.

He might have made off after a decent interval if it had not unfortunately occurred to Enoch that he really and merely had come, after all, to hear Phoebe Ann sing; wherefore, he put the girl, not only

through the anthem, but through two "services," glancing triumphantly from her to Gower during the performances, and, at the close of each, expatiating enthusiastically upon the beauty of her voice and the finish of her singing.

It was only from these assurances that Gower gathered that the girl had a voice at all, and he gathered it but dimly owing to his ignorance of the language.

"What dost ta think by her, Mr. Gower? Shoo braids a bit o' Patti, eh?"

Gower, not having the faintest notion of what was said, muttered some safe assent.

Enoch was sufficiently encouraged to enter into a long explanation of the difficulties and disadvantages which would prevent Phoebe Ann developing into a Patti, with the result of conveying to the bewildered Gower the idea that he was begging! He would have offered him half-a-crown, or, perhaps, a shilling, if he had been the kind of man to fling away half-crowns or shillings for nothing; but he was not at all. Instead, he offered Enoch his sympathy at an inopportune moment. For, when the old choir-master, in half apology for thinking and speaking so much of Phoebe Ann, explained that "Shoo wor iverrything till him," Gower promptly replied that he "was very sorry for him."

Without another word, Gower turned away and quitted the school-room, fearing further importunity, and in no slight disgust with Enoch's imagined mendicancy! On his part, Enoch looked after him perplexedly.

"He's noan all theer, isn't t' lad," he said at last.

"He haulds his head high eneu," observed Silas.

"He's nowt mich to carry in it, tha knaws," rejoined Enoch in explanation.

"Awm fair capped* wi' her keepin' company wi' sich an a gaumless chap," cried Sally Seed, who shed scandal like thistledown all over the parish.

"Who's keepin' company wi' him?" asked Enoch innocently.

"Miss May, for sewer."

"Miss May? Nay, niver! Who telled thee, lass?"

"It's all over t' place."

"For sewer it's all ovver t'place sin' tha heeard on it; but who telled it thee, lass?" Then Sally, perceiving the drift of

* "Capped," i.e. surprised.

Enoch's Socratic examination, remained sulkily silent.

"Yo' noan heerd it thro' him, or thro' Miss May, aw reckon! Nay, lass, ye mun gie up cacklin' over addled eggs. Folk ne'er heed a crowin' hen, tha knaws."

"Phoebe Ann says it," cried Sally, spitefully.

"Aw nobbut said he wor keen on her," replied the precocious Phoebe Ann.

"Folk mud say tha wor keen on a chap, Sally, abaht * believin' owt but spurrins † that any chap could be keen on thee."

This sally of Enoch's was the kind of joke of all others to be appreciated by his audience—a point-blank personality, as knock-down as a blow in the face—for the unfortunate Sally was distressingly plain. Nevertheless Enoch, who was a kind-hearted old man—for all his biting speeches—meant only a mild rebuke, in May's defence, of the scandal-loving Sally. Seeing her much mortified by the long and loud laughter of the choir, he administered what, to his thinking, was a supreme consolation—a solo.

"Yo' mun leave sich-like tales to t' Miss Hicks, lass, an' all t'other ow'd maids i' t' place; for yo' noan belang to that sawrt, or are like to belang 'em aither. Aw ne'er knew an ow'd maid wi' a sweeter voice nor a peacock screamin' agin t' rain, aw didn't. Gi'e 'em 'T' owl i' t' desert,' lass, an' they'll noan laugh at thee as an ow'd maid. Has't got 'T' owl i' t' desert' theer, Fred!"

So Sally was appeased, for she dearly loved to hear her own voice speaking or singing.

But the effect of Enoch's lecture was more than done away with by Sally's overtaking May and Mr. Gower on her way home from the rehearsal. All the Enochs in the world could not then have persuaded her that their leaving the school-room separately, was anything but a lover's ruse.

THIRTY YEARS AGO.

AND why thirty years ago? Why not twenty years—or, for that matter, fifty years—may be asked. Why, simply because the latter epoch would be too remote, and the former too near for our purpose—which is to jog the memory of those who, whether boys or men at the time, had a

share in the life of that era, and rubbed shoulders with the men of giant stature—for giants they seem to us as they loom from the distant past—who were then in their prime. It may be that the warmth and glow of youth lent its colour to that distant time, and that to-day appears in comparison but dull, flat, and unprofitable, because the eyes of the beholder are no longer fresh and undimmed. But allowing for all this, it must still be contended that a certain zest has escaped from life which it once possessed, and that the strong men, who made others strong, as was said of King Arthur—the man who made men—have vanished, or are fast vanishing away, with none to take their place.

Now thirty years ago, when the Suez Canal was undug, the Underground Railway unexcavated, and the German Empire unachieved, we had great men certainly, and we knew it. Dickens was with us in the fulness of his power—"Little Dorrit" had been running month by month in the well-known green covers; everywhere read, criticised, discussed, appreciated in all kinds of society. Sometimes the nucleus of social gatherings assembled about some skilful reader—for the art of reading aloud was then widely cultivated—eagerly sought for, fought for almost at booksellers' shops, at book clubs, and local libraries. Thackeray, too, was in the height of his popularity. His were the monthly yellow covers. Colonel Newcome was still flourishing his stick, and smoking his cheroot down Pall Mall; and "The Virginians" brought some of the charm of his earlier "Esmond" to the grateful palates of his admirers. Macaulay was still writing his history, and his grand style, lucid yet ornate, his picturesque judgements and glowing descriptions, were received with eager interest; and not to have read the last-published volume of Macaulay was something like a confession of imbecility.

And of those whose memories recall the fifties, who can forget the storm that was raised by "Jane Eyre," to us a book ever fresh and young, inspired by the ardour and passion of the best kind of feminine nature, but to the elders and rulers of those days a book altogether wild and improper. "Jane Eyre" would be kept under lock and key, and young women might be sent supperless to bed, for reading the tabooed volumes. Certainly the elders of those days sat upon us with a force and conviction that is not shared

* "Abaht," i.e. without.

† "Spurrins," i.e. banns of marriage.

by their degenerate successors, who assume the mantle but reluctantly which their forbears wore with such an impressive dignity.

Thirty years ago, too, Carlyle was groaning under the weight of his herculean task anent Frederick the Great—the labour of a Titan, if you come to think of it, so to vivify that dead mass of undigested history. And as a kind of literary antithesis there was Leigh Hunt still alive, and discouraging pleasantly about men and books. And Douglas Jerrold died just thirty years ago—where shall we now find a tongue so ready, a wit so keen? Are there any men living now whose good things fly round the town, and are carried off to the country, becoming somehow the sign and seal of one connected with the literary persuasion? And if in Jerrold we also recall the expert dramatist, we shall at once bethink us of “Black-eyed Susan,” and that will bring up some talk of T. P. Cooke, who, still not altogether a superfluous veteran, held the stage—’tis thirty years ago—in William beloved of Susan, and in Long Tom Coffin.

And, while in the way of things theatrical, we may ask, had we not Robson, the greatest of low comedians, as those esteemed him who knew him in his prime, and with him the laughter-compelling Wright, the inimitable Buckstone, the genial Paul Bedford? The dignified mantle of great Macready had not long been laid aside, and Charles Kean was in the midst of his brilliant Shakespearian revivals.

In music and the sister arts, perhaps, we shall not have so much to say for the good old times of thirty years ago. But it will take a good deal of what the present day can boast in the way of more extended musical culture and learning to make up for what we have lost—for the splendour and charm of the Italian Opera. And where are the great singers of old, confessedly and deservedly supreme—Mario, Grisi, Herr Formes, and our great English tenor, Sims Reeves, then at his best, with Jenny Lind (that sweetest of singers), the charming Tietjens, and other voices—of thirty years ago—that still the ear of memory can faintly recall?

And then the newspapers and the editors! With what energy the big drum was belaboured among them; with what a voice spoke the Thunderer, and how loomed the figure of Delane, its great chief, as a kind of supreme head among the journalists of the day! And there were statesmen, too; how thoroughly people

believed in their Palmerston! Cobden was alive, extremely wise, fair-spoken, and persuading; and Disraeli was coming to the front, and rather held back than urged forward by the once fiery Lord Derby; and Gladstone was bringing forward his magnificent Budgets, that seemed to brim over with the results of wealth and prosperity.

Where was anarchy then? Where lurked the forces that threaten the disruption of society? Even if we were revolutionists and conspirators in a way—was it not all for something that was to remodel and improve, and not to destroy the world? Charming theories we had—’tis thirty years ago—mild, benignant, mixed up with the ardour of youth and the love of beauty—

Oh! ’twas light that ne’er can shine again
On Life’s dull stream!

THE MAJOR’S BLANKETS.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

THERE was no reason why Miss Rachel Godwin should have a lodger. That addition to limited finances had once been very welcome, when she was left to fight the world with only a houseful of old-fashioned furniture—a library, of yet more old-fashioned medical works, and a collection of obsolete surgical instruments, formerly wielded by her deceased father in an ill-paid country practice.

But the times changed. Better fortune seemed to come in when Miss Godwin opened her doors to an orphan niece, although the portionless girl brought with her no gold save that in the sunny hair which framed her winsome face, and grew in a tantalising fringe over the sweetest blue eyes in the world.

First one, then two, then three of those mine ventures, which the sanguine doctor always had diagnosed so hopefully, and in which he had continually invested to reap the usual dividend of disappointment, turned out so many “good things,” and combined to make Miss Godwin, at least, comfortably off. She might have managed without the lodger. Still, as advertisements put it, “The house was too large for her requirements,” and had it been otherwise, its mistress would have suffered much inconvenience ere parting with the middle-aged, half-pay officer, whose love of rod and line had brought him to Stapleton years before, and had kept him ever since the tenant of her first floor.

Major Vincent was Miss Rachel’s ideal.

In her eyes, his short portly frame was the perfection of manly beauty—his curiously bald head the mark of intellect. Her admiration would even dare fish-bones; and when the Major brought home enough roach and dace to choke the household, she would pronounce those insipid victims "delicious." On such occasions, a certain ceremony was observed. The fish were presented with Major Vincent's compliments. Miss Godwin straightway returned an invitation to supper. And then the aunt would watch the niece's face—and watch in vain—for some reflex of her own appreciation of the homage which was laid at the girl's pretty feet.

Miss Rachel never thought of him for herself. Her own life was too mournfully distinguished as a blighted existence. No one ever spoke of a plethoric auctioneer, who had sought refuge in Spain, and was understood to have taken her young heart with him to that defaulter's paradise. It was years ago; but still Miss Godwin's most cherished possession was a huge brooch, which contained some sandy hair. The most furious creditors had forgotten; but Miss Rachel was faithful to his memory. Major Vincent came next in her estimation.

So, after twenty-four hours' absence from home, as she jumped out of the train, and scarcely stayed to greet a fair girl, waiting to meet her, Miss Rachel's first inquiry was for the Major.

"Oh, we have not neglected the precious charge. His 'Serene Highness' is in perfect preservation," Grace answered, with no reverence for the exalted title bestowed by herself, in recognition of her aunt's adulation.

There was a tiny flush on the pretty cheeks, and she went on with a light indifference, almost painful to that loyal lady. "The unkind east wind has made him a trifle hoarse, as might be expected, when an elderly gentleman will sit all day by the riverside in March. His complexion may be a more pronounced yellow—that is curry; and he is certainly rather nervous and fidgety—that is, fretting for your absence."

It was Miss Rachel's turn to colour a little. She always tried a calm unconsciousness when Grace affected to relegate the half-pay Indian officer's affections to her.

"The Major never thinks the house the same in my few absences." Miss Rachel spoke not altogether with regret. "I did not want him to know."

"His sympathetic nature must have felt the absence, and the chilly night so far overcame his innate modesty, as to induce him to write a note to me, in addition to the neatly sealed packet awaiting you. The end of the month—pay day, you know."

"Grace!" Miss Rachel Godwin looked anxiously up and down the road; but the station was left behind them, and no one was about in the keen March wind. "My dear, such very plain—quite coarse—language."

"Alas! I never shall learn refinement," was the mocking answer. "Well, then, it is the day for his 'Serenity's' punctual monthly honorarium. That is a superior expression, almost equal to his well-selected phrases, which demanded an answer."

"An answer! Grace, dear, has he? Do you mean—?"

"I mean that the Major, when not shivering by the waterside, shivers at home."

Miss Godwin's brief gladness, if gladness it were, was dissipated by the quiet interruption:

"The meek request was about his own warmth and comfort—more bed-clothes, in fact."

"You attended, Grace?"

"Can you doubt it? Our esteemed friend only had four blankets, so I directed Martha to put on another pair. His humble petition was for an eider-down quilt; but, of course, my delicacy could not discuss such details, and he was referred to you in a little letter as ceremoniously polite as his own."

"He was satisfied, dear?"

"Yes; meeting him on the stairs he seemed more than satisfied." Grace's face clouded at the reminiscence. "I hope he will not be so satisfied again. His thanks were too effusive; his bow nearly sent him over the banisters—and—and I think he wanted to kiss my hand."

"How I admire that frank, soldier-like gallantry."

The elder lady was enthusiastic; the younger very decisive.

"I don't particularly; my hand is not for him."

"It was an honour, child; an honour from such a brave soldier, such a perfect gentleman."

"I object to honour from brave soldiers; if they were fifty times as perfect, I shall always be true to Mark."

"Grace, please spare me those allusions.

A mere clerk—the drudge of a wine merchant's office, whose father was——”

“Yes; I know, aunt. A bankrupt and all that,” broke in the girl. “Is that Mark's fault?”

“I never said so. The young man is well enough in his own sphere.” They had reached home; but Miss Rachel paused at the door in overwhelming dignity. “Let him so remain. I refuse to sanction Mr. Mark Leslie's alliance.”

“We have nothing half so grand as that. Ours is a simple engagement”—there was a gleam of something akin to defiance in the blue eyes, a heightened colour on the fair cheek—“an engagement to which we shall both be ever true, despite all the world.”

“Grace, I will not—goodness gracious!” Miss Godwin might well exclaim as she entered her own usually neat and spotless domain. The hall was splashed with more mud than had ever been there before. Little pools of water were shining everywhere, and the prim lady stared aghast.

CHAPTER II.

“GOODNESS gracious!”

It was not altogether a lucid remark, but was repeated by the bewildered lady. Another surprise was coming, and, to meet it with becoming dignity, Miss Godwin sat herself down on the wet chair which an odd-looking young man placed for her, as she inquired with manifest displeasure, “Mr. Leslie, is it you?”

It was not an unnatural question. Mark was anything but a dandy. Still, his clothes were always carefully brushed and well-fitting; his collar immaculate; his auburn hair—Grace would not allow it was red—neatly arranged. Now that last showed bits of grass and river-weed, which same clung round his neck to decorate his shirt-front, whilst the moisture trickled from his boots and marked his track, until, in the half light, that wine merchant's book-keeper might have been a new style of Triton, whose assumed garb of civilisation was several sizes too big one way and proportionately scanty the other.

“Is it you?”

There was no doubt, at least, in one person's mind. The girl fearlessly put both her hands in his two muddy ones, and the touch and her bright smile gave him courage to face the mistress of the desecrated establishment.

“Pardon me, Miss Godwin, I will not

affect to be welcome here. Let me assure you that my intrusion is not quite a willing act.”

Miss Rachel acknowledged the speech by a frigid stare; and she noticed that he was wearing an overcoat, which, ample enough to button twice around Mark's rather slight frame, yet barely reached below his waist; also that it, of all his garments, was dry.

“I do not know who can have invited you to enter. I cannot think that Major Vincent——”

“He did,” put in Mark quickly; and there was a flush glowing through the mud-stains on the young man's cheek. “He did, being doubtless unaware that I had been forbidden these doors.”

“And is that gentleman also to be thanked for all this disorder?”

“Exactly; it is mainly his doing. Not but what I may have contributed a little,” which, as Mark was standing in a pool of his own drippings, seemed not altogether improbable. “The fact is, Major Vincent has met with a slight accident.”

Miss Godwin trembled visibly. Remembering his love of angling, those offending, dirty footprints assumed a terrible significance; and imagination saw the unlucky officer fished out from one of his deepest roach-holes—not pale—even alarm could only picture that saffron visage a delicate, primrose tint, as they bore him home, limp and motionless.

“Mr. Leslie! dear Mr. Leslie!” Mark had never been favoured with that adjective before. In her excitement she even took the hand which had been giving Grace's fond fingers a cold bath all this time. “Is he—is he drowned?”

“My good lady, pray be calm. Although Major Vincent certainly did fall into the water, it is all right. He is none the worse, I assure you—certainly not drowned by any means. I chanced to be near the river and was fortunate enough to pull him out. I brought him here, and have just seen him safely to his own room.”

“Where you can hear him for yourself, aunt,” interposed Grace; “apparently very much alive, calling for a warming-pan, all the blankets in the house, and hot brandy.”

“His voice does seem unimpaired.”

Then Miss Godwin added illogically: “It is like his brave spirit to suffer and make no moan.”

“Positively Major Vincent is unhurt.” Mark was very near smiling. “The bank was treacherous, and it landed him in a

lot of soft mud, floundering in which he made a very considerable moan. His frightened struggles might have rolled him into deep water had I not come along."

"And he owes his valuable life to your bravery. Grace, dear, Mr. Leslie saved him."

It was more than superfluous for the aunt to challenge the niece's admiration. The girl never doubted her lover's heroism.

"Of course he did," was the proud rejoinder. "My Mark would save anybody from anything. I hope the Major was grateful."

"Without doubt," Mark Leslie smiled again.

"He thanked me as well as his chattering teeth and the pace we came here would let him. He was even so thoughtful as to insist on my wearing this dry coat of his."

"Whilst we keep you standing about in your wet things. Run away, sir, this very instant," commanded Grace.

"We have been inconsiderate, I fear." Anxiety for her favourite relieved, Miss Rachel could think of his preserver. "Go home at once, Mr. Leslie. Wait one moment though." The mistress of the house disappeared. She did not mind leaving those two young people alone together. She was gone a brief space, to return with a bottle of brandy. "Accept this. Take it—in bed—to oblige me."

"I will not promise that, Miss Godwin," after a moment's hesitation over the gift. "But I will drink your health and happier days to us all, and may no harm result to Major Vincent."

The lady was looking kindly after the wine merchant's clerk, so recently condemned, and now marching away with a bottle of her best brandy bulging out the Major's coat.

"He is a worthy young man. A very worthy young man. Only——"

Miss Rachel had watched Mark out of sight, and then proceeded upstairs, where a prolonged snore came through the lodger's closed door to comfort her, and interrupt the murmured speech. She was thoughtful, almost tender, as she came down to open the Major's missive to herself; and the yet more scrupulously-folded note enclosed with the usual "honorarium."

With customary deliberation they were counted out. But those six golden coins set up such a rattling in her shaking hand,

that the girl looked across to see a startled, almost incredulous wonder in her relative's face.

"Aunt, what is the matter? Is there a bad sovereign? Has he given notice to quit?"

Miss Rachel Godwin's manner was strange, while the answer was an enigma. "I cannot trust myself to speak just now, dear. Major Vincent is the dearest man—as I am the most fortunate woman in all the wide world. Notice to quit, did you say? No, indeed! Death alone shall ever part us."

CHAPTER III.

"MAJOR VINCENT'S very kindest regards, and he is none the worse for his accident, and begs the honour of an interview with Miss Godwin."

It was the answer next morning to her anxious enquiries, and explained his restless tramping overhead for so long.

"His Serenity has been making himself beautiful for ever. Alas! it's not for me. But I'm off."

The aunt had imparted some wondrous information to her niece, and now, as they heard the gentleman to whom it related coming down, Grace, with a mischievous smile, made her escape by the window.

"Be of good cheer, auntie," she cried. As a matter of fact, her relative was in a curious unwonted perturbation. "Be of good cheer. You see, after all, I was right. My benison be on you both."

The Major entered. Like Miss Rachel, as Grace had phrased it yesterday, he was "nervous and fidgety," and when he had, in person, answered her tender enquiries, although there was a chair placed invitingly at the lady's side, he took one at the other end of the room. Apparently he was as interested in the landscape outside, as she was in the pattern of the carpet within.

"My dear madam, you see a humble suppliant—a suppliant very conscious of his own demerits, and who yet aspires to your favour."

Miss Rachel murmured something as he paused for inspiration after getting so far. Her encouraging smile was intended to refute his own disparagement; but his humility insisted on that expression.

"I am conscious of my own demerits! Yet I am so bold—I hoped—that is I am afraid—I mean I ventured—I should say I was afraid to venture to hope——"

Major Vincent halted his verbal squadron. He was floundering in a flood of

words, as overwhelming as the ooze, and mud, and tangled weeds—as much beyond his depth as the river from which Mark Leslie had rescued him the day before.

"You had my note!" he jerked out desperately.

The lady inclined her head, and he went on:

"My youth is over, I care not to deny it," generously self-abnegating. "It is over. But youth, as a rule, is not very comfortably off. The toils and dangers of warfare have taught me to appreciate domestic happiness. You know so much, dear Miss Godwin."

"I know more than that," she responded with flattering warmth. "I know that any woman may be proud of a brave soldier's love."

The lady was fumbling at her neck. The old-fashioned gallantry she admired brought him across the room. It impelled him to raise her hand to his lips; and the pin of a brooch which Miss Rachel had made a palpable parade of unfastening, scratched Major Vincent's nose.

"You are very good," he resumed; "to a quiet old soldier habit is second nature. I could not leave Stapleton, and the fishing, and you. I almost feared to offer so prosaic a lot to one whose young life might well have more glowing dreams."

Miss Rachel was rather mystified, and yet pleased. Some of his speech might be vague, but the latter portion was nice.

"Happiness is not of the gay world," she murmured softly; "more is mine than I dared to hope for."

With an impressive air, still meant to attract attention, the speaker put the before-mentioned brooch solemnly from her. As it lay on the table, the earliest April sunshine—it was peeping out at last—lighted up the sandy hair of that auctioneer who so long ago had taken her heart, her love, her truth, in one lot to Spain. Miss Rachel turned her face away, and buried the memory beneath a convenient newspaper.

"It is well to forget the romance of youth," she whispered. "Let the past go. The future will make amends."

It was the soldier's turn to be mystified. He still held fingers which attempted no withdrawal. He was too ceremonious to let them drop.

"It is like your kind heart to live again in the happiness of others. I knew your goodness would give me the dear girl's hand."

"The—dear—girl's—hand!" Miss Rachel jerked away her own digits, as she vacantly re-echoed the words: "The—dear—girl's—hand!" You mean that you would marry my niece?"

"Surely." Her altered tone warned the Major of impending trouble. "Surely."

"It should be an honour; but it is unfortunately impossible." Miss Godwin's temperature made one great drop from "summer heat" to "freezing." She was by no means sorry to chill and wither the buds of hope. "Quite impossible; the child is engaged already; and"—with emphasis—"to a sincere and estimable young man."

"Pardon me. I fail to understand." The half-pay officer could be immensely stiff when he chose. "My conceit may have misled me; but the young lady, your niece, did refer me to you."

"Stop!" Miss Rachel bravely faced the situation. "It was an unfortunate mistake. You must have made an error in your correspondence. Your note to my niece only related to more"—the speaker's virgin modesty found a fitting word—"to more drapery. That was all. Another hardly comprehensible communication was enclosed to me."

In this awakening from his dreams, as the miserable knowledge dawned upon him, the unlucky Major actually gasped. It was a crushing defeat; but like a skilful general, he prepared to retreat in good order.

"I have been guilty of a prodigious blunder," he groaned. "I was nervous and fidgety"—the girl's words again. "I used the wrong envelopes; and I humbly apologise."

"My dear Major, it is nothing." Uncertain how far she had committed herself, the lady also meant leaving the field with dignity. "Your letter to me brought the usual 'honorarium'; the other part was scarcely read. I deemed it a mere idle pleasantry—a jest for the day—the first of April, you know." The cold smile upon her face was like a gleam of sunshine on an iceberg. Never had her hero seemed less heroic in Miss Rachel's eyes. Yet she had no pity, and cruelly emphasised the date. "Yes, it seemed an April Fool sort of joke," she went on. "Certainly, I was surprised at a gentleman asking my niece for more blank—that is for warmer drapery."

"I would be shot rather than discuss such details with a young lady. It has

been a most absurd mistake," groaned the Major, then he stopped.

The reference to his own ease and warmth evoked another reflection. In sober middle-age, with his fixed and methodical habits, comfort was, at least, an equivalent for love. Miss Godwin—the action was yet more significant—had picked up her brooch. The hands replacing it were plump and white. He remembered those hands had always delighted to minister to him, and again he took possession of them.

"Kindest of ladies, bear with me. May not Fate have been wiser than I was? Suppose my letter had been written for you, what would your answer have been?"

She did not tell him; but her fingers lingered in his, though maidenly reserve sealed Miss Rachel's lips. The Major misunderstood her silence. He led her to the window. A young couple were in the garden outside; and Grace's winsome face showed a new happiness.

"That sweet girl will be leaving some day"—the aunt winced—"and you would be very lonely, dear." He had never so spoken before. It brought back her smile. "Very lonely, dear Miss Rachel."

"Lonely no more, Bartholomew." It was Major Vincent's Christian name. Her lips lingered with a gentle cadence on the polysyllables. "Bartholomew, never lonely with you!"

Despite the bliss of the moment, that officer was troubled by a new reflection. The tale would get abroad, and he thought of a certain fair, but mocking face.

"My dear Miss Rachel, let this be our secret. I would rather, much rather, that Grace did not know."

"The child has her own happiness to think of." In view of that evident anxiety, Miss Rachel was content that Mark should claim his bride. "Her own happiness with the Mr. Leslie who rescued you. He is but a clerk"—with the grandeur befitting a prospective officer's wife—"but a highly respectable young man——"

"I should think so," broke in the Major warmly. "The highly respectable young man saved me from a terrible fate, and I owe him more than thanks. His employers, Rack and Binney, are not bad people, though their sherry is not a really dry wine. But that is not their clerk's fault. I must find a better berth for Mark Leslie—not only for saving my life, but for dear Grace's sake. We will all try to make this a very happy and real First of April."

EMIN PASHA.

SINCE the murder of Gordon, and the death of Livingstone, no figure in all the history of European enterprise in Africa has attracted so much attention as that of the heroic individual now known as Emin Pasha. While we write, two hemispheres are waiting in anxious suspense for news of the rescue of Gordon's devoted successor by the same intrepid traveller who carried aid to Livingstone. Yet even as Livingstone did, so it is probable that Emin will do—refuse to quit the scene of his labours and his triumphs until his work be completed. Meantime the occasion is fitting to consider who and what is the remarkable man now shut up in Central Africa; why he is there; and what he has done during the long period of his isolation. A volume of his letters and journals was recently published in Germany, under the editorship of Professors Schweinfurth and Ratzel, and has just been republished in this country under the supervision of Dr. Felkin of Edinburgh*—himself a well-known African traveller. From this volume we are enabled to gather all that can be told of Emin, until Stanley returns—with or without him.

Emin, then, is the name adopted by Eduard Schnitzer, a native of the small town of Oppeln, in Prussian Silesia. He was born in 1840; and two years later his father, who is described somewhat vaguely as "a merchant," removed with his family to Neisse, in which town the mother and sister of Emin still reside. At Neisse he was educated at the Gymnasium, and in due time went to Breslau University, and later to Berlin, in pursuit of the study of medicine. He graduated at Berlin in 1864, and was very proud at being able to sign himself M.D. But more even than by medicine—in which he took both a philanthropic and a scientific interest—was he attracted by studies in natural history and dominated by a strong desire for travel. Both tastes were so strong, and yet moved so much in harmony, that at the end of 1864 he went to Turkey, to see if a medical practice could not be found or established there. He was fortunate enough to obtain an appointment on the staff of Hakki Pasha, whom he accompanied on a series of arduous journeys through Armenia, Syria,

* "Emin Pasha in Central Africa." London, George Philip and Son.

and Arabia, and back to Constantinople. Hakki died in that city in 1873, and Eduard Schnitzer in 1875 returned for a time to his friends in Germany. But not for long, for with him, as with all who begin a life of wandering, the restless spirit of Ulysses was ineradicable. In 1876 he was to be found making his way to Egypt, and there he entered the service of the Khedive as Dr. Emin Effendi. He was attached to the Governor-General of the Soudan at Khartoum, and on arriving there, was sent to be chief medical officer in the Equatorial Province, of which Gordon Pasha was at that time Governor.

The reason why Dr. Schnitzer took the name of Emin, was because he thought that his best chance of obtaining an entrance into the Mohammedan world—in which he was to work for an indefinite number of years, and where a traditional distrust exists of Europeans—was to divest himself of all traces of his Frankish origin. His extraordinary mastery of languages made it easier for him than for most men to do this. He was not only accomplished in French, English, and Italian, and in several Slavonic languages, but he had, during his wanderings, obtained a thorough mastery of Turkish and Arabic—"as few Europeans know them," to use his own words. He was studying Persian, and by this time is doubtless at home in most of the dialects of Central Africa.

Thus, then, by changing his name, Schnitzer might pass among the Mohammedans of the Soudan for an Egyptian, and, at any rate, as not one of the hated Franks, and this counted for a great deal in the strange land where he was to labour. The name he adopted—Emin—is an Arabic word signifying "the faithful one," and never was a happier selection made in nomenclature. Assuredly as long as civilisation has any history, and human effort any chronicler, the name of Emin will be remembered and honoured.

It need hardly be said that Gordon took at once to Emin. He regarded him as something a great deal more than a medical officer; sent him on tours of inspection through the province, and on diplomatic missions to various chiefs. Finally, when appointed to the post of Governor-General of the Soudan, Gordon handed over to Emin Effendi the administration of the Equatorial Province, which, broadly, extends from about the ninth to the second parallel, down, in fact, to the northern shores of the Lake Albert Nyanza, with

which all readers of African travel are more or less familiar. Between the southern limits of the province and the Lake Victoria Nyanza, on which are various missionary stations, are the native states of Unyoro and Uganda—two nations who are always more or less at war with each other, and through whose territory it has been impossible for some years for Europeans to penetrate. The famous Mtesa was King of Uganda; but since his death that state has been dominated by his son Mwanga, a youth, by all accounts, of the most approved savage type, and to whom the murder of Bishop Hannington is attributed.

It was in this far-reaching territory that first Sir Samuel Baker and then "Chinese" Gordon had struggled to suppress the iniquitous slave-trade, a struggle in which neither was by any means cordially supported by persons in authority at Khartoum and Cairo. Nevertheless, Gordon had brought it into an organised and a peaceful, although not into a "paying," condition, for it was labouring under a heavy debt, and was leaving an annual large deficit. When Gordon retired he was followed by a succession of corrupt and incompetent native governors, who rapidly reduced the province again to a state of anarchy, and made it the abode of oppression, and robbery, injustice and brutality. The various tribes, who had expanded under the benign influence of Gordon's rule, suffered severely under his infamous successors, while the slave dealers, entrenched in fortified villages, at once recommenced their abominable traffic.

This was the condition of the country when Gordon, having returned to Khartoum as Governor-General of the Soudan, appointed Emin as Governor of the Equatorial Province, his post up to that time having been only Surgeon-in-Chief. Up to this time, too, he had no Egyptian rank, but, in course of time, became successively Bey and Pasha.

Emin assumed the reins in 1878, and within a few years he had effected a great change in the province. He had got rid of a number of the disreputable officials, many of them Egyptian criminals banished and taken into Government employ after undergoing their sentences. He had replaced untrustworthy Egyptian soldiers by natives whom he had trained and could trust. He had rebuilt the stations which had fallen into disrepair; equalised taxation; removed the discontent of the people, and had cleared out

the slave-dealers, who were the curse of the land.

He also superintended a hospital at Lado, then his chief station or capital, and made frequent tours through his territory. By the end of 1882 he was able to report that his province was at peace, and free from slave-traffic; that the cultivation of cotton, of indigo, of coffee, of rice, and of sugar was being industriously prosecuted; that a regular weekly post had been established between the stations; that the roads were being mended, and made more permanent; and that the budget, instead of a deficit, was showing a profit of eight thousand pounds after providing for all the expenses of administration. And all this was achieved, unaided, by a German doctor, who knew nothing of military matters, finance, or agriculture, when he went to Africa, and whose only experience in diplomacy had been gained there under Gordon.

But not the least remarkable thing about Emin is his fondness for scientific work, and the ardour with which he pursues botanical and geological inquiries in spite of, but not to the neglect of, the overwhelming official duties resting upon him. His journals teem with notes of the profoundest interest to the naturalist; and there is also reason to believe that he has solved some geographical problems of importance with regard to the countries and the rivers to the south of the Albert Lake, and in other parts.

It is, indeed, expected that, when he returns, or is once more brought into touch with Europe, he will enable geographers to practically reconstruct the map of Central Africa to the north of the Equator.

Dr. Felkin, who was with Emin in 1878 and 1879, records that what he was most struck with in Emin is his devotion to duty, and the absolute unselfishness of his character. His whole heart, says Felkin, seems to be centred in the welfare of his people and in the advancement of science, without any thought of fame or personal advantage.

Dr. Hartlaub says: "The amount of work that Emin Pasha has performed in making zoological collections, observations, and notes, is astonishing in the highest degree. It could only have been performed by a man whose heart was aglow with the pure fire of scientific interest, with enthusiastic, absolutely unselfish love of Nature, and with an irresistible impulse to add to her knowledge the trea-

asures to the full extent of his powers. Emin was able to turn this impulse into action, notwithstanding the pressure of difficult surrounding circumstances, and the many and varied duties which his high position compelled him to fulfil."

This then is the man who, always treated with coldness by the Egyptian Government, was abandoned to his fate when the Mahdi troubles broke out, when Khartoum fell, and Gordon was slain. For three years and a half Emin was without trustworthy news from the outer world; without any at all from Europe. He learned that Lupton Bey, formerly his Lieutenant, and afterwards Governor of the neighbouring province of Bahr-el-Ghazalhad, surrendered to the Mahdi, and for a time he felt that he would have to do the same.

But he held out; and by-and-by the reverses in the fortunes of the False Prophet confirmed him in his determination to hold his territory until he was relieved.

Towards the end of February, 1886, he received, via Zanzibar, a despatch from Nubar Pasha, informing him that the Soudan was to be given up, that the Government were unable to assist him, and that he might take what measures he thought proper to leave the country. In short he was left to his fate, and it was small consolation to him to learn that he had authority to draw on the English Consul-General at Zanzibar, for what money he might need. Writing about this to Dr. Schweinfurth, he bitterly remarks: "They simply suggest to me the way to Zanzibar, just as they would a walk to Shubra!"

But the way to Zanzibar was not open. Mwanga had succeeded to Mtesa as King of Uganda, and had adopted an attitude of hostility to Europeans. He would not allow Emin to pass through his territory, and intercepted, for a long time, the supplies which Dr. Junker had dispatched to him. And even if he could have got away Emin would not have gone. Writing to Dr. Felkin, in July, 1886, he expresses the belief and hope that England, at any rate, would not leave him there to perish, and would appreciate the importance of supporting him in crushing the slave-trade, and keeping the people of the province free.

In April, 1887, he learned through Mr. Mackay, the imprisoned Missionary in Uganda, that help was being sent to him, and he writes again at that date to Dr. Felkin, expressing his gratitude and thanks. But.

he adds: "If the people of Great Britain think that as soon as Stanley or Thomson comes, I shall return with them, they greatly err. I have passed twelve years of my life here, and would it be right of me to desert my post as soon as the opportunity for escape presented itself? I shall remain with my people until I see perfectly clearly that both their future and the future of my country is safe. The work of Gordon, paid for with his blood, I will strive to carry on, if not with his energy and genius, still according to his intention and in his spirit." And again: "All we would ask England to do, is to bring about a better understanding with Uganda, and to provide us with a free and safe way to the coast. That is all we want. Evacuate our territory? Certainly not!"

What then is the charm of this territory to which Emin is so attached? It is a beautiful country, as we have heard before from Sir Samuel Baker and other travellers; but we gain a better idea of many portions of it from Emin's journals. True, it has its disadvantages, as the following description of a march in the district of Fatiko will show:

"Grass of a height and closeness rare even in Unyore, and dripping with dew, had literally to be broken through, for, as soon as we had left the village, there was no road of any kind. As I had taken the lead, I had, of course, the first and full enjoyment of the grass, thorns, and water, and at a temperature of sixty-three degrees Fahr., to have to crawl, as wet as a drowned rat, through bushes, is unpleasant even in Central Africa. It was scarcely possible to take compass bearings, everything was so wet, and the grass thrust itself so impudently even into our ears and eyes. The first clearing was reached after about two hours and three quarters' march, and was hailed with joy, for we could dry ourselves there in the sun. The delay—our rate of marching could not have been more than two miles an hour—was made up for by a quick march on a better ground we had now reached, where the men ran to warm themselves, for the cool wind was blowing. At Modo, our old night quarters, which we reached shortly after midday, the water, always scanty enough, had been drunk up by elephants and buffaloes, and so we had to go on with thirst unquenched for two hours and a quarter longer to Ris-el-Fil. There we found water in a row of holes, which tasted good after a march of eight hours."

This extract will serve to illustrate some of the discomforts of travel in the outlying parts of Emin's territory, and is, indeed, typical of what travellers have to expect in African travel. But in the settled parts of his dominions, far other pictures are presented. At the stations, gardening has been promoted, and fruits and vegetables are produced in abundance. Among his many agricultural experiments, Emin has introduced several varieties of bamboo, has encouraged the natives to cultivate several American grains, the seeds of which he had had sent to him, has promoted and extended the cultivation of rice, and many other crops. "The love of gardening and cultivation," he says, "has much increased among my people, and I daily receive letters begging of me seeds and plants." But, from a commercial point of view, the most promising aspects of the country are in the advantage which it offers and the success which has been obtained in the cultivation of cotton, and coffee, and of sugar. Besides these products, Emin wrote to Dr. Schweinfurth in 1883, naming ivory, oil of several kinds, skins, corn (!), ostrich feathers, india-rubber, wax, and iron as products of the country in which a large trade could be done. The deposits of iron are in several places, and the existence of other valuable minerals is more than probable. Caoutchouc, Emin said, he could supply in large quantities, but at the time was prohibited from entering into direct commercial relations with "the world," because he was obliged then to deliver all his produce at Khartoum, and to receive from thence in exchange the very worst goods at the very highest prices.

It is not difficult to see that in a country so richly endowed, and with a people who have now learned the blessings of peace and have been trained for years to habits of systematic industry, there must be a considerable market for many European products. The difficulty is to gain and maintain a line of communication. The Nile route is now closed, and is likely to remain closed for a long time, but in any case it was a long and difficult route. Other possible routes exist from the Zanzibar coast and through Uganda, and from the Congo. The latter is what Stanley has followed, and his experience will have much effect in determining the future course to be adopted in opening up the Equatorial Province.

These are the commercial considerations; but there is also a philanthropic considera-

tion. The slave-trade has been the curse of Africa, and there can be little doubt that it has been winked at, and even shared in, by high Egyptian officials. In spite of them, and in spite of the strength of the Arab traders, Emin has banished the traffic from his dominions, at any rate, and humanity demands that we shall not permit it to be revived, as was done after Gordon left the country. In fact, the only hope of quashing this nefarious trade is in preserving European dominance in the heart of Africa. Missionary effort will certainly not do it unaided; but in this connection it is encouraging to learn from Emin that not more than ten converts to Mohammedanism have been made in his province in twenty years. This is characterised by his German biographer as a crushing fact for the future of Islam in Central Africa. "On no account," says this writer, "must any one imagine that our countryman is a renegade, or that he has given up the faith of his fathers. Emin does not belong to those half-hearted Christians, who talk about the advantages of the Mohammedan religion as a civilising agent in Africa. On the contrary, it may be seen from many of his letters, that he has the heartiest sympathy with the efforts of Christian missionaries." And, let us add, he has nobly prepared the way and smoothed the path for these missionaries.

We should have liked to have shown from Emin's journals something of his wonderful faculty of observation, and his graphic power of description. We should have liked, too, to have cited some of the curious facts he records about the characteristics and habits of the various peoples gathered under his rule, as well as those he visited in outlying native states, for nothing escapes him. But space will not permit, and, indeed, the journals present a perfect embarrassment of riches. The difficulty, indeed, would be to know what to select. But our object in this paper has been rather to show the man and his own personal work, than to present a view of Central African life and geography. When the result of Stanley's expedition is known we may return to the subject again, for, as the old Roman said, "something new is always coming out of Africa."

RATHER MERRY ENGLAND.

WHEN our summer holiday has come to an end and we are being whirled homewards in the closing days of October or in

the beginning of the traditional month of gloom, we are not unlikely to congratulate ourselves that our lines have been cast, for the coming season, amid the glare of the gaslight, the crowd, and hurry, and stress of the streets, rather than in some village, dropped down in one of the reeking valleys or gloomy flats through which we are being carried. Here and there in the distance a solitary light, shining out from some shapeless mass of distant cottages grouped around the stunted tower of the church, reveals to us that men manage to exist in such forlorn solitudes though the days be dull and lonely and no companionship possible without a long tramp through the miry ways. To the true town bird the sense of desolation is deepened, rather than dispersed, by the knowledge that men are living there in those dark grey spots which serve to throw up into yet more dreary relief the cold brown of the sodden fields. The shudder will be all the more sincere if he can call back to memory certain days of his own youth passed in such a place, tied by the leg to the clog of some such surroundings, while his spirit was stretching out towards the keener and fiercer flame of life which burns where men swarm and elbow each other at every turn.

All this comes natural enough as a reflection to a man whose range of experience lies principally within the Bow Bells limit. It is not strange that they should fail to see that the spirit of change has been at work, though perhaps with slower hand, in the country as well as in the town. With many of us, who dwell beneath the canopy of smoke, the materials for valid judgement are wanting; but if any man who has yet in his mind a fairly accurate memory of what the country was five-and-thirty years ago, and is, at the same time, well posted in the minor details of contemporary rural life, will take the trouble to compare things present with things past, he will perceive that the conditions of life in a village are as much changed as those of the town.

Let us begin with the question of recreation. Those who have read Mr. Yates' "Recollections," and are acquainted with the history of Mr. Clive Newcome, will most likely come to the conclusion that the Londoner, in search of fun in these days, will have a harder task before him than his father and uncles had in the time when Paddy Green was consul. His country cousin, on the other hand, is much better off than he was in those days. This

I affirm on account of my own early experiences of my birthplace, experiences which I compare with what I now read in the county paper of how the people in Arcady amuse themselves, both under green leaves and under the mirk and mist of winter.

It is a bare truism to state that the countryman is no longer the isolated creature he was when William the Fourth was King, whether or not he is the happier for the change is another matter. Even through the forties and fifties it was no uncommon thing to meet with the belief that the streets of London were paved with gold. The fact that a man belonged to another parish was enough to stamp him as a stranger, and, therefore, an object of suspicion. And, year in year out, how unbroken the monotony was! The season's difference was well nigh the only difference apparent to those bound to the soil; bound, indeed, by no positive law, but realising to the full how strong were the fetters of dire necessity. There was harvest supper in the autumn, and Martlebury Fair in spring—seasons of plentiful intoxication and assaults more or less violent, and of not infrequent visits to the county gaol. There was, indeed, the village ale-house, which was open all the year round, but habitual resort thither was only for those who had ready cash; and wages were low and bread not over cheap in those days. Only here and there could there be found anyone able to read; but if the whole parish had been scholars it would have been difficult to find suitable mental food. For good or evil, the penny paper had yet to be born. Blank dullness, unmarked save by a drunken bout or so, lay stretched between the first of January and the thirty-first of December.

But now the perusal of my county paper in the dreary winter months fills me with amazement. In the local news I read every week paragraphs by the dozen which bear plain testimony to the fact that the rustics are having a very different time nowadays. Our old friend, the penny reader, is quite in the background. Like the battering-ram, and the stage-coach, he has served his purpose, and must now stand aside in favour of those new births of the age, the amateur reciter and actor, the parson with his magic lantern, the local band with their horns and fiddles, and the local Christys.

As my eye lights on an account of a musical entertainment, lately given at West Bockham, I reflect how completely West Bockham must have changed from what I

remember it, to be in a position to furnish a performer capable of entertaining, or an audience susceptible of being amused. A drearier village it would be hard to picture, bare of all legendary rural charm. There was no resident clergyman, the living being held with an adjoining and more attractive parish; neither was there a school nor a resident farmer of any consideration; but there were several public-houses; and, if report did not lie, several families with whom theft and poaching were hereditary callings. Now there must be a school, for that was where the entertainment took place; and the destination of the proceeds, which were to be divided between the organ fund and the parish library, shows that West Bockham has not been standing still while the rest of the world has been forging ahead.

However, the character of the vocal and instrumental pieces of the programme prove that due reverence is still paid to antiquity. The overture to the "Caliph of Bagdad" was "brilliantly rendered" on the piano by the Rector's lady and Miss Rudd. "My Pretty Page" was sung with "charming taste and feeling" by Miss Wilkins and Miss Tompkins. "The Village Blacksmith," and "The Chough and Crow," had also their places in the programme. It comes somewhat as a shock, an uncanny lapse into contemporary art, when one reads that Mr. Fred Rowdyboy provoked shouts of laughter and a double encore by his humorous interpretation of "Two Lovely Black Eyes." The great surprise, however, is left for the last. "The House that Jack Built, in character." The maiden all forlorn, the man all tattered and torn, were represented by a lady and gentleman whose names were strange to me; but when I came to read that "roars of laughter" greeted the impersonation of the "priest all shaven and shorn" by the popular Rector, the Reverend Adolphus Redman, I was more than amazed.

Dolly Redman, who used to nod condescendingly to me when we were up at Oxford, one of the leading spirits of the Bullington, whose slim form I have often seen in pink outside Canterbury Gate on mornings when the old Berkshire or the Heythrop were within reach. What would Dolly have said, I wonder, in those days if we should have foreshadowed his destiny, and exhibited him as an antic posturing for the delectation of a lot of ploughboys.

Well, Dolly carried away from the House

just enough of the humanities to give him his degree; and, what use these may have been to him in his after career, it will not profit us to inquire; but if in the hunting field he picked up enough knowledge of men, to teach him to bend his back when there was work to be done, shall we not hope that his tutor dealt lightly with him in the matter of irregularity at lectures; and harbour a suspicion that, after all, Dolly got something in return for that rather stiff cheque which he handed to Tollit at the end of his time? Cynics, if they will, may speculate whether as much could be said on behalf of the tuition fees which he paid to hear the Rev. Mudley Dormer lecture on the "Ethics of Aristotle." Dolly, I remember, was a capital cricketer; and I have no doubt he is now as efficient, as a civilising factor in the cricket field during the summer, as he is on the platform in the winter.

Next I read of the doings of the Wood Walton Amateur Dramatic Society. Wood Walton! I knew it once as well as I know the Strand now, and I would wager that not half-a-dozen of its inhabitants could have guessed what a theatre was like: now Wood Walton is acting the laughable farce of Diamond cut Diamond. Mr. Heartly—guardian to Charlotte—was admirably personated by Mr. Tipple. I did not remember Mr. Tipple; but when I read that Mr. James Straker, as Captain Seymour, fairly brought down the house, I seemed to know where I was. The name of Straker was familiar enough to me. In my youth did not Mrs. Straker keep one of those wonderful village shops? I wonder whether the stores have made an end of them all. When I used to cross Mrs. Straker's threshold in search of brandy-balls, or some boot-laces, or a packet of nails, or a ball of string, or half a Dutch cheese, what a marvellous perfume assailed my nostrils, a perfume made up of all the above, and many other superadded odours. There was, I remember, always a dirty-faced little boy, Jimmy by name, tumbling about the shop; and, more often than not, sprawling over the counter as his mother served me. Is it possible that he can have grown up to figure as "Captain Seymour (in love with Charlotte)"? Is it possible that the change which has come over myself, since I bought and enjoyed Mrs. Straker's brandy-balls and Dutch cheeses, is as great as that which has transformed the squalid urchin of the village shop into the dramatic exponent of the elegant

Captain Seymour? Charlotte herself was personated by Miss Jane Grymer. Heavens, what is the world coming to! Grymer père, in my time, was a working cobbler, a Radical, as all cobblers are, in temporal, and a born Nonconformist in spiritual affairs. I believe his zeal would have led him (after dusk) to break the windows of any building in which such carnal soul-destroying wickedness as play-acting was being perpetrated, and now his own flesh and blood are aiding and abetting therein! I remember, too, that there used to be two pretty little children playing about the cobbler's stall; a girl and a boy. The first no doubt is the "jeune première" of the Wood Walton stage, and I have no doubt but that the latter felt a glow of pride as he read that the scenery painted by Mr. R. Grymer was universally admired. The more serious gatherings have nowadays their livelier side. A blue ribbon meeting is not complete without an element of vocal and instrumental music, and on these occasions the American organ generally comes out strong. It is certainly a wonderful engine of hilarious devotion; but its effect is distinctly unsecular. The performer may safely make trial on its keys of frivolities, which would be flat blasphemy on the piano. As Mr. Corney Grain says, "I have often felt a better man for listening to its lusty trumpeting."

Another consideration forces itself upon me as I read the record of these most decorous high jinks, and this is the evidence I gather from the names of the entertainers, that the social levels, even in sleepy places like Wood Walton and West Bockham, shift and intermix with the lapse of time. As I study my local paragraphs, the movement of the social unit seems to be universally upward; but here, as in a boiling cauldron, if some streams rise, others must descend, and the downward motion of the more luckless ones is not chronicled by the local contributor. Now and then I read of some ne'er-do-well, bearing a name once respected, who has been fined for drunkenness or assault, but as a rule the fall is unnoticed. To revert to the rise; the parents of the young ladies who rattle off pianoforte duets, and "give with charming grace and feeling," "The Miller and the Maid," and other such ditties, and of the youngsters who sing music-hall songs and take light comic parts, were simply peasants, and nothing else. How it is that the young people differ so widely from their progenitors, and whether the

world gains the more pronounced the difference becomes, are questions which the sociologist must take in hand.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HÔTEL DES DEUX FRÈRES.

THERE is a corner of Paris which few English know, except those who have lived there long, or by some other means know the best of it. This corner is quiet, and yet actually the height of fashion, being in the same quarter as the hotels of the greatest old families. These families, Catholic, Legitimist, and many of them immensely rich, are and must be at the head of France socially, though of course politically they have no power. And their social power they treat with so much indifference, that they are being deprived of it in great measure by the Jews, whose influence predominates in Paris now. But a few years ago these people were more consistent, and those great hotels of the Faubourg, with their high white gates and endless rows of shutters, were inhabited by some of the most really noble men and women in Europe. The mad rush after pleasure, the worship of money, were not quite what they are now; aristocrats, with many faults, to be sure, seemed better to deserve their name.

The Rue Sainte Monique was a short and quiet street, leading from a street chiefly made up of these great houses, with a few dignified shops here and there, to a boulevard opening on some old public gardens with large trees and fountains, certainly the quietest, perhaps in summer the most beautiful of the gardens of Paris. The Jardin Sainte Monique had once belonged to a large convent, which had given its name to the street and neighbourhood, the convent itself still existed, very much reduced, hidden behind towering walls at the garden end of the street. It was rich, and at that time not persecuted, and a favourite school for the young girls of the Faubourg. Next door to the convent, at the end of its long garden wall, was a very pretty house, the Hôtel Sainte Monique, belonging to the convent, but lived in for years by the Vicomtesse de Ferrand. This house also had a garden, and one

more private house brought the little street to an end. A very large and handsome house, belonging to an old family, with its stables and gardens, had originally filled up the other side of the street. But about forty years ago, the owner having ruined himself, the house was sold. The convent tried to buy it, but did not bid high enough, and it fell into the hands of two brothers, who had made their fortune as the chief barbers of the Faubourg. They turned it into an hotel in the modern sense of the word; and ever since the Hôtel des Deux Frères, as they called it, in the quiet little Rue Sainte Monique, had kept up its character as the best hotel in Paris for French people. Many people who had no house or apartment of their own in Paris lived there for the season. It was conveniently near their friends, and not far from anything; it was not dear, and it was supremely comfortable.

The present proprietor was a middle-aged man, son of one of the founders. He kept up the traditions of his family by being a Royalist and a good Christian. No Atheism or Republicanism was to be met with in the Hôtel des Deux Frères, even among the servants, at least with the knowledge of M. Dupont or his excellent wife.

M. Dupont did not advertise his hotel, and it was by the merest chance that any casual travellers found their way there. He did not want them; he was well off already, and preferred knowing who his customers were, and answering for their respectability. No snobs, no "parvenus," if possible, at the Hôtel des Deux Frères. He did not care much for foreign nobility, who were very often too ill-conducted for him; but luckily they found his establishment too quiet to suit their taste. He had a few English customers of old standing, dignified people, yet cosmopolitan, connected with embassies, equally well known in English and French society; related, perhaps, to families in the Faubourg. And a few Englishwomen less great in position had by some means found out the good qualities of M. Dupont's hotel, and were always kindly welcomed by him. He, like his father and uncle before him, had a keen eye for the sort of person who would do him credit; for other people, with all the politeness in the world, the hotel was full to overflowing. Mrs. Percival had been there in her young days with her mother, and her poor sister, Mrs. Darrell; since then she

had gone there rather often, with or without the Canon, whenever it was absolutely necessary to do a little shopping in Paris.

This year, the beginning of December found Mrs. Percival at the Hôtel des Deux Frères, with Paul and Celia. She was deeply engaged with milliners and dress-makers, and to these she gave all her time and thoughts. Celia, to Paul's happiness, did not think it necessary to show an equal devotion. She was obliged, of course, to give up a certain amount of time, and in that time she took a real and rather impatient interest in the plans and doings of her "couturière"; but stuffs, draperies, trimmings, once out of sight, seemed to be out of mind with her, and so completely that her aunt was sometimes a little bit provoked with her indifference. What was the use of bringing Celia to Paris for shopping, if she pretended to think the shops a bore, these charming shops, which in this winter season were more brilliantly distracting than ever? There would be plenty of time in the future for walking and driving about with Paul. It was rather too absurd, for instance, that some silly plan for hearing music in a distant church should hinder Celia from making an appointment with Madame Fripon. After all, however, Mrs. Percival was not seriously angry. She was too thoroughly well occupied and amused for that. She loved shopping; she could shop from morning till night without any weariness, and with the fullest confidence in her own taste. She was also very much pleased with herself for the generous way in which she was behaving to Celia; and Colonel Ward's secret, which she kept religiously, was an unfailing source of serene satisfaction. Besides, she was truly glad that Paul should be happy, even if Celia did neglect immediate duties for him. It was a new development in Celia, this kind of revolt against things practical. A little inconvenient, certainly, coming at this moment; and perhaps, for the sake of the shopping, it would have been better if Paul had stayed in England. But, after all, it did not matter much.

Mrs. Percival was quite artificial enough to agree with the French writer who talks so enthusiastically of Paris in winter. "Pour le voir beau, heureux, opulent, ce Paris du diable, il faut le regarder vivre sous un ciel bas, alourdi de neige. La nature est pour ainsi dire absente du tableau. Ni vent, ni soleil. Juste assez

de lumière pour que les couleurs les plus effacées, les moindres reflets prennent une valeur admirable, depuis les tons gris roux des monuments, jusqu'aux perles de jais qui constellent une toilette de femme."

This was exactly Paris in the first days of that December, when the marriage arranged between Paul Romaine and Celia Darrell was not much more than a month away. "Paris du diable!" Nobody could have suggested that the doings of Mrs. Percival and her young people were diabolic, except so far as all unreality belongs to the devil's kingdom; and the unreality, in this case, belonged to Celia alone. She was not happy, but she was in curiously high spirits, carried away by the strange excitement of that dim yet brilliant city, without wind or sun. It was easy to hurry through the days here, without the solemn influences of nature to bring one to one's self, the varying clouds, the sunsets, the moaning pine-woods about Red Towers. Here the days and nights flew by like scenes in a play, and Celia hardly knew how they were flying. A sort of fatalism seemed to have taken possession of her, in which her only conscious wish was to hurry on the time, to have her marriage over, and everything made certain. But these feelings did not appear to her friends, who only saw that she was looking brilliant, her eyes deep blue, a ready laugh always on her lips. She had never in her life been so charming to Paul, who felt himself quite repaid now for any little coldness earlier in the autumn. It was almost embarrassing, though the delight of it was beyond words, to find himself suddenly necessary to Celia, so that she would go nowhere and do nothing without him. His silent devotion was almost overwhelmed by the sudden difficulty of finding words. The sunshine in which he now lived, under that low grey sky of Paris, was enough to burn out of his memory all past doubts, all need of trust and patience in the days gone by.

One afternoon, just as twilight was beginning to close in on a dismal day of fog and rain, Mrs. Percival and her maid drove into the courtyard of the hotel, on their return from a long day's shopping. The hotel was already lighted up, and looked delightfully gay and comfortable; somebody was playing wild waltz music in the salon, and the waiter said that Monsieur and Mademoiselle had come in some time ago. There was a telegram waiting for

Monsieur in the bureau, he went on to say, and after he got it, he and Mademoiselle went into the salon for a few minutes; then Mademoiselle went upstairs alone. As far as the waiter knew, Madame would find Monsieur still in the salon.

Mrs. Percival looked into the salon accordingly, but saw nothing of Paul. The waltz seemed to grow madder every moment; it was played by a little man with a pale face and flying hair. A few people were scattered about the room, talking and listening: one young man was trying to persuade a girl to dance with him; it was indeed almost impossible to keep still, in that whirl of sound. Mrs. Percival had not listened with any extraordinary interest to what the waiter told her. Paul often had telegrams—from his agent, or from the upholsterer who was doing the house. Mrs. Percival climbed slowly upstairs—M. Dupont was old-fashioned and disliked lifts—till she came to Celia's door, where she knocked and went in. At first the lights and shadows in the room flickered so that she hardly saw Celia. A small wood-fire was flaming fitfully on the hearth; beyond it, close to the window, Celia was sitting in a red velvet arm-chair. A gilt clock was ticking on the mantel-piece; the floor, in deference to English ideas, was covered with red and yellow carpet. Celia's purchases, clothes, luggage, were thrown about indiscriminately. She sat there with writing things in her lap; as her aunt came in, she shut her blotting-case, and put down her pen and ink on a chair.

"Aunt Flo, what an age you have been!" she said. "Do leave the door a little open; that jolly valse makes one want to dance one's life away."

But Mrs. Percival shut the door in spite of this.

"If you feel like that, you had better go down in the salon," she said. "I am tired, and it distracts my head."

"Sit down, then, and tell me all about everything," said Celia.

She did not move from her own chair, but sat with her face turned to the window, looking out into the deepening twilight, watching the opposite house. Mrs. Percival took off her furs, warmed her feet, and gave a vivid account of her day's doings, to which it seemed that Celia was listening intently enough, for she asked a shrewd question or made a quick remark now and then.

"And what have you been doing all

the afternoon, may I ask?" said Mrs. Percival at last, remembering to be a little injured. "It is all very fine, my poking about everywhere with Timms, and ordering all these things, which are your business after all, while you do nothing but play about, and amuse yourself."

"Now don't grumble," said Celia coolly, "because you know you love and adore shopping, and I should only be in your way."

"No. Paul might be, but not you. I don't say much, because of Paul. I am doing all this for his sake, not for yours, because I like to see the poor boy so perfectly happy."

"Very well; very nice of you," said Celia, but her voice was a little discontented. "I rather wished I was with you this afternoon," she went on—"I have been sitting at this window for the last hour, certainly, with nothing to amuse me but Madame de Ferrand and her friends. I wonder if she knows what a watch M. Dupont's people can keep upon her from this window. I can see all over her garden, as there are no leaves, and into her courtyard, and I can even see her going up her pretty old stairs, and along the gallery, and looking out of the windows. She looks very old, but she walks so nicely, a graceful little old thing. The little girl who is with her must be her grandchild, I think: about eleven, perhaps—but I don't know, she may be older, only she jumps and dances about like a small child, and wears a large pinafore. And to-day there has been another arrival. Such a handsome man!"

"What very good eyes you have!" said Mrs. Percival, laughing.

"Oh yes, of course. I saw him drive up, and then there was such a bustle, and the old lady came tripping out on the steps, and the little girl raced across the court and jumped straight into his arms. Then they both tore across to the old Madame, and he first kissed her hand, as if she was a little old Queen, and she kissed him on both cheeks, and they all screamed and talked at once, and the child danced a war-dance round them. He was certainly the best-looking Frenchman I have seen; fair, and very tall, and a good figure."

"Very amusing," said Mrs. Percival. "And where is Paul, all this time?"

"I don't know. You didn't meet him? He talked of going to look for you, but it seemed rather hopeless, for nobody had a very clear notion where you were gone."

"To look for me! How absurd! I have seen nothing of him, of course. By-the-by, Jules told me he had had a telegram. I hope it was nothing tiresome."

"Oh, tiresome, yes—a horrid bother," said Celia, still looking out of the window.

"At least, he is making it so. I think he is behaving rather stupidly. I am a little bit angry with him, to tell you the truth."

"Really! Why? What was it?"

"He is going off to-night. I don't want him to go. I really can't see the necessity for making such a dreadful fuss: we shall not be here many days longer, and, if he were actually wanted, of course they would have asked him to come. As to his duty, I think his duty is to stay with me, if I want him, and I do. He had better not go: I have told him I won't answer for what may happen. The next thing will be that—that everything will be put off, and then I don't quite know—However, if Paul cares for me as much as he pretends, he will do what I wish. I have told him, Aunt Flo, and you may tell him the same."

"Tell him what? What are you talking about? Going to-night! Why, what has happened?" cried Mrs. Percival.

She sat still in her chair, thunderstruck. This conclusion to all Celia's objectless chatter about her opposite neighbours was so strange, so utterly unexpected, that she could hardly believe her ears. She waited for half a minute, frowning and amazed; then she started up, crying out, "Explain, Celia. How can I possibly know what you mean?" and came quickly across to the window where her niece was sitting motionless.

"Well, Aunt Flo, I know you will think me very heartless and very horrid," said Celia; and she slowly turned her pretty head, as it lay against the back of her chair, so that she could look Mrs. Percival straight in the face. "The telegram was from some doctor," she said. "Paul knows him; I don't. It was about Colonel Ward. 'Colonel Ward is ill. How long will you be away?' That was the whole of it. Now why couldn't Paul telegraph that he would be back in ten days, like a reasonable being? There was not a word about danger. Instead of that, almost without listening to me, he telegraphs, 'Shall be at Holm to-morrow.'"

"I don't see how Paul could possibly do anything else," said Mrs. Percival. "You forget, Paul is like a son to the Colonel. He wants to see him, no doubt; and it is just like his unselfishness, dear old man, not to

ask him to come back at once. I am not sure that we ought not all to go. I must ask Paul what he thinks."

"Oh no, no!" said Celia, with a sudden flush. "If we go, we shall never come back, and everything will go wrong, and everything will be put off. What good could we do? If Paul must go, let him go for two or three days, and come back to me here. The Colonel can't be very ill; impossible. Paul confesses that he has always been as strong as a horse. It is some nonsense of that stupid, officious, meddling doctor."

"Well, anyhow, Paul is right," said Mrs. Percival. "And Celia, some day you will agree with me. Yes, he is right to go for worldly reasons, as well as for others."

"Paul never thought of anything of that kind," said Celia. "It is only his obstinate affection for that tiresome old man; and after all, he must have made his will ages ago. Really, the future sometimes makes me tremble—that dear Colonel living at our gates, and criticising everything we do."

Mrs. Percival looked at Celia with a curious expression.

"Don't say any more," she said. "You may be sorry some day. I must confess that I should be very angry with you now, if I were not rather glad to find that you are in love with Paul."

Celia stared. Her aunt said no more, but went away and left her.

"In love with Paul!" the girl repeated to herself; and then she began to laugh. She took a letter out of her pocket and looked at it, a worn letter, crumpled and frayed at the edges.

"What a bore it is!" she said. "I suppose I am rather unhappy; certainly I am a donkey. For even if I could change things now, I don't believe I would. But I'm not in love with Paul, dear Aunt Flo, only it is too stupid of him to go away now, because I don't mind his being in love with me. Perhaps I don't care much for anything or anybody—except having everything I want, and—this horrid letter. What's the use of keeping it, by-the-by! It's dangerous—and I know it well enough to answer it, if I haven't done that already. Oh, Vincent, I wish you had let me alone!"

Then she took a written sheet of paper from her blotting-case, and read it through with smiling mouth and eyes.

"Too silly to send, I'm afraid, but I'll keep it a day or two. Is that the bell at Sainte Monique? I wonder if the nuns

would sing me into a good temper. I hate this—and I must make up with that silly boy, and let him go to his boring old Colonel in peace."

She got up and pulled the window open. It had stopped raining, and was not yet dark. In the opposite house she could see the little dark figure of Madame de Ferrand, stepping along through her glazed gallery, followed by her maid with a large cloak. No doubt she was going to Benediction at Sainte Monique. The convent church was a favourite resort of all the ladies, great and small, in the neighbourhood, and the fame of the nuns' singing was spread all through Christian Paris.

"Yes; I'll go too," Celia decided. "I wonder if I could anyhow make acquaintance with those people. They would distract me a little while Paul is away."

She put on her prettiest hat, and wrapped herself in furs. Before starting, full of a new idea of being good, she stooped over the fire and dropped Vincent's letter into it, between two little red logs. It flamed up instantly.

"I wish I needn't give you any answer but that, my friend," she murmured, and then she hurried away downstairs. On the way she met her aunt's maid, looking tired and sulky.

"Oh, Timms," she said; "you may as well tell my aunt that I have gone to church. Just across the street, Sainte Monique, the convent church, you know."

"Not alone, miss, at this time of day!" Timms remonstrated.

"Yes, alone. Tell Mr. Romaine he may come and fetch me, if he likes."

As Celia's luck would have it, just as she came out of the hotel, a small door opened in Madame de Ferrand's "porte-cochère" opposite, and she herself stepped into the street, followed by the tall man and the little girl. Celia crossed the street, and followed them closely along the pavement to the tall iron gates of the convent, which were standing a little open. A porter was in charge, and a carriage had just set down some ladies, who were walking up the flagged path, under the shelter of high walls and leafless trees, to the lighted church door. The bell was still ringing, and music and sweet odours came pouring out into the dreary evening.

The gentleman who had walked those few yards with Madame de Ferrand stopped at the gates, and lingered there a moment,

lifting his hat as the old lady and the child passed on. The light of the lamps at the gate fell full upon his handsome face, and on Celia's, too, as she went by, following the others.

Of course he looked at her, holding his hat a moment longer while she passed him; and Celia was quite aware that his glance was one of startled admiration; she was used to much broader stares, by this time, from Parisians of every degree. But she hurried on to the church door, and he walked leisurely back to the Hôtel Sainte Monique.

At the door, having quickened her steps a little, she overtook the old Vicomtesse and the young girl, who raised a lovely little dark face as the Englishwoman came up to her. Celia could not help smiling, as she met those speaking eyes, and her smile added enchantment to her beauty, more brilliant than usual after the excitement she had gone through. The French child, with one quick glance at her grandmother's still graceful back, dipped her finger in the holy water and held it out to Celia, who touched it and then crossed herself, knowing the pretty friendly custom. Then they smiled at each other again; and then the nuns in their grated chapel broke into strange magic singing, with a sweetness intensely sad:

Lingering and wandering on, as loth to die.

Thus in truth it was that Celia approached her first acquaintance with the old Vicomtesse de Ferrand, her granddaughter Antoinette, her son-in-law the Marquis de Montmirail.

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BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XV. MAY'S REPRIEVE.

AS Gower, upon leaving the school, was in no mood to return to the Vicarage to be bored by Mrs. Beresford, he lit a soothing cigar and strolled a little way up the quiet road which led to the Dingley Moors. Stopping to meditate at the gate of a farmyard, he leaned lazily upon it, blowing cloud castles into the still air from his cigar, symbolical of his thoughts. For, on a review of all May's words and looks since he knew her, he came to the conclusion that she cared for him. At least, the only alternative—to his thinking—that she was the most heartless of coquettes, was incredible. No doubt, her curt practical rejection just now of his escort looked like coquetry; but allowance must be made for the embarrassment, which he himself had felt, and which she would be yet more likely to feel, in the consciousness of the construction that the grinning choir would put upon his attendance on her.

While thus persuading himself to think what he hoped, he perceived the farmhouse door open and the figure of a girl outlined against the light issuing therefrom. Now, like most shy people, he shed his shyness in the dark, and he was, therefore, prepared—notwithstanding his profound passion for May—for an Arcadian flirtation with the approaching Phyllis. Opening the gate gallantly at her approach, he said in an insinuating tone:

"I thought you never would come, my—"

"Mr. Gower!" cried May, in a tone of by no means enchanted surprise.

Of course she supposed that he had asked his way to the Lightowlers', and had lain in wait for her here at the gate. And then the free-and-easy flippancy and assurance of his words and tone! She was furious. Having fortunately interrupted him before he had uttered the outrageous "my dear," she had not the least suspicion that this had been on the tip of his tongue. It was quite bad enough as it was, however, as she felt—and he also. He turned hot and cold in the beat of a pulse.

"I beg your pardon—I—I thought you were—I thought you would allow me to see you home," he stammered.

"It's very good of you," she replied with a cold stateliness; "but I really do not need an escort here."

"Mrs. Beresford thought that, perhaps, as it was so late, you would like—you would permit me to accompany you."

After all, thought May, it was her mother's fussiness, and not his officiousness, that was to blame; and the offensive flippancy of his address might mean only friendliness that had lost its balance. With some people, she knew, there was no mean between formality and familiarity, and the one tumbled over headlong into the other without gradation or preparation. Besides, she was an extremely placable person, and he was her guest. Wherefore, feeling almost ashamed of her ungracious petulance, she returned to something of her former friendliness. She could never again venture to be as friendly as she had been; but she could be pleasant without being familiar, even though he could not follow the advice of Polonius: "Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar."

"I hoped you would hear the rehearsal out to please old Enoch," she said.

"I put in a lot of it," he answered eagerly. "I heard that girl——"

"I hope you thought a lot of it, or told Enoch so—she's his favourite."

"Yes, he told me all about her," he said lugubriously, "or I think he did; I couldn't well make out what he said, though."

"You made a very good guess, I fancy, for he just worships her."

"Yes," he replied absently; and then added with imploring earnestness, "I hope you forgive me for coming after you."

His tone, which was almost a proposal in itself, alarmed May not a little.

"You mean that I am very ungracious and unreasonable," she replied, affecting to think that he spoke ironically. "But I resent, as a reproach to the parish, having even Mary sent after me."

"But I hadn't seen you all day," he pleaded pathetically.

"I hope you were better employed," she replied hurriedly, and almost irritably. "What have you been seeing all day? You did Jeffrey's, of course."

"What!—that iron place?"

"Yes," she answered, laughing at his woeful voice. "You might be Dante just emerged from the Inferno."

"Well, it was like that, you know," he said in an injured tone.

"It is considered one of the best things to see," she answered in her father's defence, "and you can see it, besides—being all fire—while you can hardly see anything else in Leeds for smoke."

"It's a fearful hole; I thought I should never be out of it. I was longing to get back all day," he added significantly.

"I'm glad there's a lower deep than Hammersley."

"It wasn't Hammersley I wanted to get back to," he began.

As his tone left no doubt of what was coming, May dashed in desperately:

"But Leeds you wanted to get away from. Not that you loved Hammersley more, but Leeds less. Perhaps you didn't see Hunslet?"

"Hunslet? No."

"Nor go on the river? But I forgot, you're no fisherman. Still you might have liked a row on the river."

Gower, who had seen nothing but a stagnant Stygian sewer-like ditch, with water of the colour and consistence of tar, was a little bewildered.

"We didn't see the river."

"But you must have crossed it, if you went to Jeffrey's."

"Oh, that thing! I didn't know it was a river."

"Yes, that was a river, and Hunslet, if melted down, would be just like that. You should have seen Hunslet."

"I never know when you're joking," he said aggrievedly, for a joke is the most untoward of all interruptions—as May well knew—to a proposal.

"I ought to have broken it to you; I shall next time," she answered, laughing pleasantly, but speaking quickly and nervously.

"I hope you will, if it's like your sending me to Leeds to-day."

"I!"

"But it was you, wasn't it?" he asked in the expectation of her disclaiming any share in the matter, and thereby giving him another opening for a declaration. He could not help remarking her nervousness, and he inferred from it that she was warding off a proposal out of pure shyness. If she had meant to refuse him, he thought that she would not have "played him" in this nervous way. It never occurred to him that she might be anxious to spare him the mortification of a refusal by showing unmistakable danger signals.

"I asked father to take you in charge, if you mean that," she replied.

"You were tired of me!"

"If I were, I couldn't say so; could I?" she rejoined, laughing.

"But really," he persisted fatuously, "you do not know how I missed you."

It was at this critical point that Sally and four other choir girls came upon them and wished them good night, not without many significant and exasperating giggles.

The interruption caused by meeting the girls having given him some moments for reflection, he was able to say, when they had got out of earshot of them: "I missed you awfully."

This stupid repetition irritated May still more. It was like the fretful persistence of a fly that nothing will wave or warn off.

"It is very good of you to say so," she answered in the most formal and frigid tone.

"But I mean it, really. I thought I should never get through the day without you; I've got so used to you, you know; and you are so—so—there's no one like you; and I longed to see you and to say——"

"Fred's come!" cried May suddenly, not at all as a diversion, but simply because

the thought of Fred's return dwarfed to nothing this foolish declaration.

"How do you know?" gasped the disconcerted Gower.

"Because there's a cab at the door. Don't you see it against the light? Do let us hurry, Mr. Gower."

As it was not possible to make a running proposal, Gower had to postpone the performance, not without a misgiving that the postponement might be indefinite. This sudden diversion to Fred might be a ruse of coquetry or shyness, but it was scarcely the ruse of a girl in love.

Meditating ruefully on this he hurried along by her side up the drive to the Vicarage to find upon its steps—not Fred, but—Mr. Pratt.

Gower's heart sank within him as he recognised the greasy little brute, and perceived, besides, that he had been drinking. He was not, however, too tipsy to have his wits well about him.

"Here is Mr. Gower," said the Vicar, who had been summoned by the maid to deal with this suspicious stranger.

"All right. How do, Mr. Gower? See you for a moment? Business—a little matter of business," cried Pratt.

"Perhaps you'd like to see him in the study," suggested the Vicar at sight of Gower's pale and troubled face.

"Yes, thank you. I've no idea what he wants," gasped Gower in guilty confusion.

Pratt, glancing from him to May as she passed him, felt sure that here was another card, and a high one, in his hand.

"All right, guv'nor," he said. "Know what I want in no time."

But by this both the Vicar and May had hurried out of sight of the scene, to spare their guest's feelings.

"This way," Gower said in an agitated voice, while preceding Pratt into the study.

"Well, what is it?"

"It's them," Pratt replied, producing the packet of letters and slapping them with one hand while he held them with the other. "Letters of yours to my daughter—what do they mean? Do they mean honourable? Are you goin' to stan' by 'em? I say, are you goin' to stan' by 'em?"

"Stand by them?" faltered Gower.

"Stand to 'em, then—marry my daughter honourable?"

Gower stood staring stupidly and helplessly at the little blear-eyed brute, trying to realise the frightful ill-luck of his appearance at such a moment, in such a place, with such a demand. Why, it was

his arrival that had just interrupted the proposal to May! And how far off that proposal seemed now! What a hideous chasm yawned suddenly between them!

"I—I don't know what you mean," he stammered.

"What I mean? What you mean—what them letters mean. Do you know that? Do you know they mean marriage, or a breach o' promise o' marriage?"

"You are mistaken, Mr. Pratt. I meant nothing more than—than friendship. Miss Pratt had so many friends," Gower gasped confusedly and inconsequently.

"Miss Pratt has a many friends, but none on 'em 'ud dare to write like them to her," slapping the packet again with his hand—"if they didn't mean honourable. They speak for theirselves," he added, holding out the packet. "An' they'll speak to some tune, if you think to go back on 'em—they will that."

"Did Miss Pratt send you to say this?" asked Gower feebly.

"Miss Pratt's in my hands, sir—in my hands, an' in the hands of my lawyer, an' in the hands of a British jury, sir, if this is all you've got to say."

"If you've put it into a lawyer's hands, then I can only refer you to mine," Gower rejoined, as he now began to think that Pratt was threatening law to raise the price he came to extort for the letters.

He was pulling himself together, and since he was quite as cunning as Pratt in his way, it was diamond cut diamond.

"I have not put it into a lawyer's hands, Mr. Gower, sir; for why? I says, Mr. Gower is a gen'leman, I says, an' will deal reasonable an' honourable with me, I says, as gen'leman with gen'leman."

As he seemed to put aside the forlorn Pattie, and her blighted hopes and heart, Gower felt emboldened to say:

"How much do you want for them?"

But this set Pratt off in maudlin ravings about his girl and her feelings, and it was some time before Gower could bring him to the point again. At last, after a long wrangle, during which Pratt had twice got as far as the door in indignant disgust with the terms offered by Gower, it was agreed that the letters should be given up upon immediate payment of one hundred pounds. Pratt again and again protested that only the most desperate and immediate need of this sum to stave off commercial ruin would have induced him to sell for such a paltry price his daughter's feelings and damages; for her feelings were sprinkled as casually

and incongruously as poppies among corn in her father's estimate of the damages which would be awarded for them. As, then, Pratt swore it would be utter ruin to him not to have this money within two days, Gower promised to procure it forthwith from his father.

It will be seen that Pratt had stolen a march upon Fred. Concluding that Fred had volunteered to manage the matter for his friend, in part because of Gower's feeble-mindedness, and in part because Fred probably held as a hostage Pattie's letters to himself, Pratt thought it wisest to deal directly and promptly with the principal, and extort what he could before any communication was possible between the two friends. Hence his peremptory insistence on an instant settlement.

CHAPTER XVI. CONFIDENCES.

GOWER, confessing to the Vicar, with what seemed an engaging frankness, that the man was a dun to whom he owed money for the upholstering, painting, and papering of his rooms, explained that he would have to return home to persuade his father to settle the bill. Of course the Vicar hospitably pressed him to return to Hammersley when he had got this trouble off his mind, and when Fred would probably be at home to entertain him. Gower gratefully and eagerly accepted the invitation—with his eyes fixed on May—and, promising to return in three days at farthest, took his departure.

Meanwhile, Fred in London waited wearily and in vain for Pratt's reappearance according to appointment, till at last he could stand the suspense, and his suspicions of some foul play, no longer. He would run home, see Gower, find out if he had heard anything either of the letters or of the forgery, and take his measures accordingly. Liverpool was nearer Leeds than London, and he could take the first ship from Liverpool due to any part of the New World if any danger appeared. There was, besides, in the corners of his mind the thought that he could make to May and his mother an effective parade of his affection, which drove him to run the most terrible risk in order to see them once more, and for the last time.

Accordingly he appeared a day or two after Gower's return to the Vicarage, and was met first by May.

"Why didn't you write?" she murmured reproachfully, as she hung upon him.

"Because I didn't want to worry you," he replied in a tone which suggested that his one thought in all his troubles was she. "All's right, now!" she whispered anxiously.

"Don't talk of it," he answered irritably.

Here Gower appeared, and to him he was profusely apologetic, intimating to him at the same time that it was in his interests he had been detained in London.

"But we'll have it out together over a pipe to-night, old fellow," he said, putting his hand affectionately on Gower's shoulder as he entered the hall. Gower, on his part, was reassuringly responsive, and Fred felt that all was safe as yet.

In the hall Mrs. Beresford met them, fluttering about Fred like a hen that had hatched out a hawk's egg. She yearned to pet and purr over him, but she dreaded a rasping repulse—not without reason. He despised his mother—as much, perhaps, for her adoration of himself as for her general fatuity; since, with such natures as Fred's, kindness, like gold, is appreciated or depreciated in proportion to its scarceness, and a giver makes himself cheap in cheapening his gifts.

"I do wish you had let us know you were coming," Mrs. Beresford said feebly, not for the first time.

"I've just told you, mother, that I didn't know myself," he retorted petulantly.

"It was only about supper, dear," replied his mother in a propitiatory tone. "I should like to have had something for your supper."

"There's something, I suppose," he growled ungraciously.

"There's only some cold beef," she said in a lamentable voice.

While he supped, however, she left him unmolested, for the poor woman was well-nigh paralysed by the alteration she now perceived in his appearance. He had certainly been ill; perhaps so ill that he had had to go to London for advice, and that in London he was unable or unwilling to write home about his condition. His illness, and his dread to let them know of it, accounted for everything, since he would shrink from giving them any anxiety he could possibly spare them. This, of Fred, who, if his little finger ached, would take care that the whole household and half the parish should know it!

Poor Mrs. Beresford having got this idea into her head, harped upon it, after her manner, all the evening, not without some countenance from Fred himself. He was

always ready to play the rôle of self-sacrifice and magnanimity, especially to his mother and May; and in this case he was anxious for them to fix on any reason but the true one for his London visit. Wherefore he admitted, with seeming reluctance, that he had been very seedy, and put aside petulantly the rest of his mother's theory without explicitly contradicting it. Then May began, of course, to believe in it, and even the Vicar was half taken in.

"Have you been to see a doctor, Fred?" he asked anxiously.

"I hadn't any money to throw away on doctors," he replied evasively and aggrievedly; and then he turned as a diversion to ask Gower: "What did you find to do here?"

"Oh, I've been all over the place, and to Leeds."

"Beastly hole!"

"I didn't mind it at all," Gower hastened to say politely; an answer which tickled the Vicar.

"It's really good of you to say so," he remarked in his pleasant way.

"Dr. Allman is one of the best doctors in England, they say," remarked Mrs. Beresford, apropos of Leeds, where that famous surgeon practised.

"Oh bother, mother. I am all right now," Fred cried irritably.

"If you were all right you wouldn't have gone to London for advice, and then to have no money!" she cried with a reproachful glance at her husband.

"Fred didn't go to London for advice," the Vicar remarked quietly.

Fred cast a startled look over at his father in the fear that he had come to know all; but it was only from his knowledge of Fred that the Vicar derived this assurance, as Fred immediately perceived and resented.

"I never said I did," he growled sulkily.

"He's no need to say it with that face. I'm sure no one who looks at him would doubt his being ill, if it wasn't his own father," exclaimed his indignant mother with irritating irrelevance.

"My dear, I only said he didn't go to London for advice; but it's not fair to vivisect him in this way the moment he returns," the Vicar said apologetically, conscious of the bad taste of this altercation in his guest's hearing.

May, being still more uncomfortably conscious of this, hastened to change the conversation.

"Do you know that Miss Hick——?"

"Apropos of vivisection?" interjected the Vicar.

"No, she didn't say an unkind word of any one to-day: but she has been marrying Mr. Spratt again. Who to, do you think, this time?"

"Either yourself or Mrs. Hedges; for there is no one else left."

Mrs. Hedges was an aged charwoman.

"To Miss Firth!"

"Miss Firth! But she's in another parish, my dear. We're not freetraders; we can't afford it; with a score of unmarried girls on hand we must encourage native industry."

"At Mr. Spratt's expense!"

"I don't see what Mr. Spratt has got to do with it; it's altogether Miss Hick's business, I take it. We must convert her to protection."

"He needs it any way, poor little man!" replied May.

"Did you try to get it out of her head?" asked her father.

"I did what I could; but her head is like a missionary box, open to get contributions from everyone; and it is much easier to drop a thing into it than to get it out again."

"Like Pandora's box, you mean," cried her father. And, indeed, most of the evil scandals that kept the parish lively, issued from Miss Hick's teeming brain.

"She has a sort of curatophobia," he added, turning to Gower, "and has got an idea that all curates—even poor Spratt—must 'have their fling,' as she calls it."

"I think she sometimes mixes him up with Mr. Miller," May remarked in explanation.

"Desinit in piscem mulier," cried the Vicar, laughing in rare enjoyment of his pun upon Spratt's name; for the schoolmaster still clung to him, and a pun, and especially a classical pun, is a schoolmaster's ideal of wit.

Gower grinned a sickly smile, that kind of laugh turned pale with a guilty consciousness of hypocrisy—for he had no idea of the joke; knowing, however, that "mulier" meant a woman, and imagining, therefore, that the quotation must be a humorous description of Miss Hick, he murmured something about "it hitting her off to a T."

"You've not been to see her?" the Vicar asked hastily, to cover his retreat upon the evident missing fire of his little joke.

"No," Gower replied, shaking his head decidedly.

"Oh, but you ought really; that is, if you don't mind leaving your character behind you when you leave, like Sir Peter Teazle. At least, she gives you fair warning of what she'll make of it by the way she will speak to you of other friends. It's like going into a catch-penny photographer's, where former victims are exhibited to suggest what a ghastly likeness of yourself will be shown to the next camera."

"But she's exceedingly generous——" pleaded May, and then, catching Fred's eye, she stopped confusedly. Of course she had not in her thoughts Miss Hick's generosity to Fred; but he had, and, as the conversation made him feel more and more uncomfortable, he said to Gower:

"You'll be dying for your baccy, old fellow," after his manner, in little things as in great, of affecting to consider another, when his exclusive consideration was himself.

Thus the two youths retired to the study, to poor Mrs. Beresford's distress, for she grudged Fred out of her sight for a moment, and she feared the effects upon his shattered health of smoking and late hours.

"Well, old man, here I am at last," said Fred, taking the most comfortable chair in the study and lighting one of Gower's cigars. Then he puffed meditatively for some seconds in embarrassed silence before he added: "You must have thought me a regular welsher for cutting off like this, eh?"

"I knew there was something up."

"By George! there was the devil and all up, and he isn't laid yet either by a long way—not by a long way," he reiterated, staring gloomily into the grate.

"Money?"

Fred shook his head.

"It's a deal deeper hole than that, though money may pull you out of it yet!"

"Me!"

"Why, I told you, didn't I?"

"You said it had something to do with me; but I thought you meant it as a blind to your father. I couldn't think of anything. It's not Yates, is it?"

"Yates? No. I wish it was. It's a worse mess than that for both of us." Here Fred paused for a moment, and then rose, flung into the grate the cigar he had just lighted, and paced the room in an

agitation which was not all assumed. Gower followed him with bewildered eyes, till Fred, stopping suddenly and turning almost fiercely upon Gower, cried:

"Do you remember that cheque for eight pounds you lent me?"

"Yes."

"Well, I changed 'eight' to 'eighty,' endorsed and cashed it!"

Gower fell back in his chair and gazed up at him with white face and wide eyes, trying to follow out the consequences to himself of the forgery.

"I wouldn't have done it for anyone but you; and I wouldn't have done it even for you, but that I thought your father was dying, and the cheque would be returned to you."

"For me? How do you mean?"

"To buy back those letters you'd written to little Pratt. There was a breach of promise in every one of them."

"Why—why, I bought them back myself only last Friday!" gasped Gower.

"By Heavens! What a scoundrel! I hunted him up to London, and all over London till I found him, and arranged with him; and he goes behind my back after all. Did he go to your father?"

"But why did he take them to you?" asked Gower, who was cunning enough to read something wrong in Fred's manner.

"He handed them to me first in mistake for some of my own."

"Oh," rejoined Gower, in a tone that expressed, "it was your own letters you bought with that cheque!"

"What do you mean?" cried Fred, turning sharply upon him and adopting a defiant tone as the most consistent with innocence.

"I mean that he might have brought them to myself."

"No, you don't; you mean that he never brought them to me or sold them to me. You mean that I never had them in my possession at all."

"And you mean you had them and returned them?"

"I had got them safe in my desk; but when I hurried off to cash the cheque, I left both desk and door open in my excitement, and the robber returned within the hour and stole them before I got back. I didn't miss them till he had cleared off with the money."

"And with your letters?"

"No, I had got mine back," Fred admitted disconcertedly.

"Bought them back?"

"Of course I had to buy them back. But I had got yours back before my own, as my own weren't worth sixpence in a court of justice."

"How much had you to give for them?" asked Gower.

"You mean you don't believe a word I say!" cried Fred, falling back upon bullying as the safest evasion. "Perhaps you'll believe I bought your letters if I repeat their contents to you. I had to read them to see if they were as compromising as he made out, and worth what he asked for them. Did you write this—, or this—, or this—?" he asked, repeating from the letters the most compromising passages that he remembered—a recitation which had the reverse of a conciliatory effect upon Gower.

"You've read my letters; but it wasn't for them you forged that cheque. What hurry was there if my father was dying as you thought? Hang it, Beresford! you seem to think I'm an idiot!" Gower cried.

"There was just this hurry, he wanted the money at once to save himself from immediate ruin. Do you think he'd have taken eighty pounds for what he could have got eight times eighty pounds for in a breach of promise suit, if he hadn't been in a hole?"

Gower remained sullenly silent. Fred's sudden come-down to a calm reasoning tone, just when he was accused in so many words of being a cheat and liar, left no doubt at all in Gower's mind that he had forged the cheque for the redemption of his own letters. If he had given the eighty pounds for Gower's letters, what remained to him to buy back his own? But, indeed, the whole story was transparently and absolutely false to Gower's thinking. However, he was too hopelessly in love with May to quarrel with her brother, and he therefore remained sullenly silent.

Suddenly Fred started up and cried furiously: "D— you, I've done with you! I'd made my mind up to bolt from London; but I thought I'd come down to warn you and bid you good-bye, and all the thanks I get is to be told that I'm a liar!"

So saying he strode to the door in unfeigned fury this time.

"Do you mean to leave the country?" asked Gower, suddenly realising Fred's desperate danger from the law. Fred, however, taking no notice of the question, opened the door violently.

"I say, Beresford, stop: listen!"

"Well?" asked Fred fiercely, holding still the handle of the open door.

"Shut the door and let us talk it over. Come, man, shut the door and be reasonable," Gower said soothingly, but in the precise tone of superiority in which Fred had been used to talk to him. Fred felt the reversal of their relative positions which it expressed, yet he shut the door sulkily and returned to the fireplace.

"You weren't really thinking of leaving the country?" asked Gower again.

"Do you suppose I'm going to stay here to be sent to penal servitude for forgery?"

"It's the devil's own mess. What on earth did you—is to be done?" he hastily said in correction of himself.

"If you could intercept the cheque?" suggested Fred feebly, cowed at the thought of his position. His nerve was quite gone, and he was beginning to accept as natural Gower's patronage.

Gower shook his head decidedly. "There's no stopping it now till it comes back to the governor. It will kill your sister and mother," he added, giving Fred a new hope, for his mother was plainly thrown in as an after-thought.

"Do you suppose I haven't thought of that? If it wasn't for May's sake, I shouldn't mind it half as much. I can't get her out of my thoughts."

There was a minute's silence, during which Gower, whose passion for May was by this time at fever-heat, turned over in his mind the bearings of this horrible scrape of Fred's upon his suit. To begin with, its detection would put out of the question his father's consent to his marriage with May. On the other hand, if by his means Fred's crime could be kept from his father's knowledge, it would at once remove this obstacle, and promote his suit immensely.

"Look here, Beresford, there's nothing I wouldn't do for your sister; and if you can think of any way of stopping this thing, I shall do all I can to manage it for her sake."

Fred was hereby left in no doubt at all of two things: first, that Gower did not believe one single word of his story, and would not therefore move a finger to save him for his own sake; and secondly, that he was "gone on May," as he phrased it to himself. However, he saw it was wiser to ignore his friend's virtual disbelief and renunciation of him, and to cling to this new plank flung to him almost contemptuously.

Then ensued a discussion as to the best way of intercepting this forged cheque, and of setting right Sir George's bank-book by the payment of seventy-two pounds, with the result that Gower agreed to start to-morrow to consult the family solicitor, while Fred promised to refund the seventy-two pounds. Gower took pains to impress upon Fred that the one hundred pounds, which he had just extracted like a tooth out of Sir George for the redemption of the letters, had made the old man unapproachable by him for any purpose for months to come.

The resolve upon joint action of any kind seemed to take an immense load off Fred's mind. The mere confession of the crime was an immense relief; but it was to this resolve on action what the escape of steam through a safety-valve is to the turning of it on to the cylinders.

Whisky and water, of course, helped to lighten the load still more; so that before the two youths retired in the small hours, Gower had confided his frenzied passion to Fred, and Fred had resumed something of his former lofty tone of patronage to Gower. In truth, Gower's lovelorn confidence invited Fred's contempt; since this excellent brother held May cheap, because she cheapened herself to him.

"Hit there! by George!" he exclaimed, when Gower had at last got out his confession. "And how does she take it?"

"I hardly know; she's always pleasant, but—"

"Do you mean her manner hasn't changed since she found it out?"

"But she hasn't found it out. I haven't spoken yet."

"Hang it, man; you don't suppose she'd have to wait till you spoke to find it out. They all know it before we do ourselves."

Gower shook his head dissentingly.

"Pooh! You don't know them," rejoined Fred, knocking the ashes from his pipe on the top bar of the grate. "There never was a girl so stupid as not to feel the nibble on the line before the man feels the hook in his jaws; and May's quick as a hawk's eye."

"But her manner hasn't changed much—not so much, I mean, as if she was sure—she's been a bit more stand-off since I came back," Gower said somewhat confusedly.

"Of course, she's read you through and through."

"Do you mean that her coolness is against me?"

"She mayn't have read herself through and through yet," answered Fred evasively.

He thought May's holding off a bit was very much in Gower's favour, but he was not going to say so, and thereby cheapen his sister, the hostage for his safety.

"She just worships you."

"Oh, she's staunch enough," Fred replied carelessly.

"There's nothing she wouldn't do for you."

"Even marry you," rejoined Fred, laughing with vinous boisterousness. "Well, old fellow, if she'll do it to please me, it's done."

"Not that, of course," replied Gower, himself somewhat excited by his potations, but keeping still a steady eye upon his object; "but you might give me a lift in her good opinion."

"Never fear; I'll praise you till she won't know you," Fred answered, laughing again, with noisy delight at his own wit.

Gower did not join in the laugh, nor did he make an immediate answer. Presently he said with unmistakable significance: "You'll take her into confidence about this?"

"About your feelings?"

"About that cheque."

"Why should I? To make her miserable? I thought you wished to spare her?"

"Well, you know, it's for her sake I'm mixing myself up with it."

Fred perfectly understood the bargain thus suggested. Gower would interfere to save him, only on condition that May was told of this heroic interference and of its motive.

"If she doesn't care for you already, that won't change her," said Fred sulkily.

"You can do as you like," Gower answered menacingly, with boyish sullenness.

There was then a sulky silence of some seconds, which Fred at last broke.

"I'll tell her when you've set it straight; she won't mind it so much when the danger is over." A bargain which Gower perfectly understood.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

APRIL.

THE Latin name for this month was Aprilis—from aperio, to open—it being the month when trees and plants were supposed to burst their buds. It formed the second month of the Romans. It was consecrated to Venus, the goddess of Beauty. The Saxon name for it was Oestre month (probably meaning Easter) or the

goddess of that name. Charlemagne called April "grass" month, which name the Dutch previously applied to it. Whatever the origin or signification of these names, we know that

Earth now is green, and heaven is blue;
Lively spring which makes all new,
Jolly spring doth enter—
Sweet young sunbeams do subdue
Angry, aged winter.

In the rural districts of England it is an article of common faith that we cannot have too much wet weather in April, for, combined with March winds,

April showers,
Help to bring on May flowers.

To the farmer rain in April must be the most pleasant sight, if there be any truth in the old adage that

In April every rainy day
Means so much more of corn and hay.

If the first three days in April be foggy, we are told there will be a flood in June. The authorities on such subjects do not at all object to snow falling in April, for they assure us that "a cold April the barn will fill," and also that

April's snow
Makes May blow.

Other weather prognostics will be found recorded on their respective days. April is not one of the most unlucky months in the year, though an old quack has informed us that "In the month which we call April, the last Monday" is a particularly fatal day, and by my calendars I see that the sixth, seventh, tenth, eleventh, sixteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first, are also dangerous days. Another old scribe says the first Monday in April is a dangerous day because Cain was born and Abel slain on that day. To guard against misfortune during this month the sapphire should be worn. In former times it was supposed to free the possessor from enchantment, and denoted repentance and kindness in disposition. There was, however, an exception to this, for

She who from April dates her years
Diamonds should wear, lest bitter tears
For vain repentance flow. This stone
Emblem of innocence is known.

The first day of April is well known as All Fools' Day, and has been noted from the very earliest times for its pranks.

The first of April is also Easter Day this year. On the Eve of Easter, it was formerly customary, in Catholic times, to extinguish all fires, and light them anew. The priest then blessed the newly-made

fire, and a brand from it was supposed to be effectual as a charm against thunder-strokes.

As a mark of abhorrence of Judaism it was once common to cook and eat a gammon of bacon on Easter Day, and, in ridicule of the bitter herbs used by the Jews to celebrate the Passover, the tansy pudding obtained a footing in this country.

Easter festivities were common in Scotland. Fuller gives a lovely description of the festivities of lively and finely-dressed children at Berwick-on-Tweed, attended by servants. This charming group, he says, is joined more or less by the parents of the children, who, together with such as are attracted by curiosity, form on such occasions a company of a great many hundreds. They assemble in greatest numbers behind the barracks, where the rampart is broadest. The fruiterers attend in full display, as well as many itinerants in various pursuits. The whole company may be called a sportive fair. From the "Table Book" we learn as to Ireland that, in the county of Antrim, Easter Monday was observed by dancing, jumping, running, climbing, and drinking. Brawls, black eyes, and broken bones were the result. The trundling of eggs was a more innocent amusement; this was practised by the Presbyterians of County Down.

One of the institutions of Easter Monday was the Grand Epping Hunt, which the "Chelmsford Chronicle" for April fifteenth, 1805, thus describes: "On Easter Monday last, Epping Forest was enlivened with the celebrated stag-hunt. The road from Whitechapel to the Bald-faced Stag on the forest, was covered with Cockney sportsmen, chiefly dressed in the costume of the chase, in scarlet frock, black jockey cap, new boots, and buckskin breeches. By ten o'clock the assemblage of civil hunters, mounted on all sorts and shapes, could not fall far short of one thousand two hundred. There were numberless Dianas also of the chase from Rotherhithe, the Minories, etc., some in riding habits, mounted on titups, and others by the side of their mothers in gigs, tax-carts, and other vehicles appropriate to the sports of the field. The Saffron Walden Staghounds made their joyful appearance about half-past ten, without any of the Melishes or Bosanquets, who were more knowing sportsmen than to risk either themselves or their horses in so desperate a burst. The huntsmen having capped their half-crowns, the horn blew just before twelve

as a signal for the old, fat, one-eyed stag (kept for the day) being enlarged from the cart. He made a bound of several yards over the heads of some pedestrians at first starting, when such a clatter commenced as the days of Nimrod never knew. Some of the scarlet jackets were sprawling on the high road a few minutes after starting, so that a lamentable return of the maimed, missing, thrown, and thrown out, may naturally be expected."

On Easter Eve, from the Tweed to below the Trent, it was not so long since the youths and maidens were in the habit of visiting the clothiers' and milliners' shops, in order to make purchases for Easter Sunday. They had a strong belief that minus a small article of personal adornment worn for the first time on Easter Day, rooks or some other birds would spoil their finery.

On Easter Tuesday, in each year, the scholars of Christ Church Hospital pay a visit to the Mansion House, where they receive from the hands of the Lord Mayor an Easter gift. As the boys pass before the Chief Magistrate in the saloon, they each receive from him a gift in new coin according to their standing in the school. The Grecians receive a guinea each; the junior Grecians, half-a-guinea; monitors, half-a-crown; and the rest of the scholars one shilling each. Each also receives a cake and a glass of lemonade, and, after the ceremony, they are accompanied by the Lord Mayor and civic dignitaries to Christ Church, Newgate Street, where the Spital Sermon is preached.

One of the most horrible massacres ever recorded, occurred on an Easter Monday, April the thirtieth, 1282, A.D., and is recorded in a very old work "Das Mittelalter," by Professor Dielitz, as follows:

"It was on Easter Monday, A.D., 1282, that the Nobles and Knights (of Sicily) were assembled at Palermo, in obedience to a summons issued by John of Procida."

An explanation of this is perhaps necessary. Sicily was at that time ruled by Charles of Anjou, son of Louis the Eighth of France, who was most overbearing in the harshness he exhibited towards his Sicilian subjects. This had the effect of exciting in their hearts feelings of animosity towards the King, and one John of Procida, a physician, disguised himself as a monk and went about the island inciting the natives against the French rule. On Easter Monday "it was customary for the people of the town, French as well as

Sicilians, to attend Vespers at the Church of Moareale, distant about an hour's walk from Palermo, and afterwards to pass the evening in festive rejoicing at the same place. A stringent order had been published by the town authorities that no one was to be armed; such being thought necessary in order to avoid a possible collision between the Sicilians and the French. It chanced, however, that a certain insolent Frenchman, named Drouet, grossly insulted a young lady of noble rank, who, with her parents and her betrothed, was present on this occasion, by attempting to search her, on the assumption that she had a weapon concealed in her dress. On seeing this, the young lady's friends rushed furiously to her assistance. A thousand daggers glittered in the air; there was a general attack on the French by the Italian crowd, and a fierce battle ensued. Drouet, and those of his countrymen who had come to his rescue, were at once struck down, and in a few minutes the carnage became general. Then, shouting 'Death to the French!' the Sicilians hurried back to Palermo. Arrived there, the conspirators placed themselves at the head of the infuriated mob. The palace of the Governor was stormed and the functionary put to death. A search was then made through every house for concealed French people, and all who were discovered were at once pitilessly murdered. Nearly four thousand persons lost their lives in Palermo that night. After that the conspirators repaired to their own homes and organised a general massacre of French throughout the island. In order to be sure in all cases that a person was French and not Sicilian, the murderers gave him a test word to repeat. The word chosen was 'ciceri,' pronounced as though spelt 'chit-cheri,' supposed to be impossible for a French tongue to pronounce; and did the unfortunate person fail in repeating the word, he was killed on the spot. In Messina, where, owing to the presence of a strong garrison, the insurrection was latest in breaking out, three thousand persons were murdered, after much fighting. In the end, two Frenchmen alone remained on the island. They were saved by a friend, who incurred great danger on their account. Charles of Anjou was in Rome, with his friend the Pope, when he received the news of the massacres." This Massacre of the Vespers, as it has come to be called, ended in the overthrow of the cruel French rule in Sicily, and the

restoration of the old line of monarchs in the person of Peter the Third of Aragon.

A singular custom exists in some of the towns on the Lower Rhine on Easter Day, namely, the selling by auction of young marriageable girls. For nearly four centuries the town crier, or clerk, of Saint Goar has called together all the young people, and the highest bidder has had the privilege of dancing with the girl he selects, and her only, during the year following. The proceeds of the sales are dropped into the poor-box.

April the eighth is Low Sunday, and is always the first Sunday after Easter, and probably owes its name to the fact that in former times the service on this day was of an inferior character as to solemnity.

April the fifteenth is the next festival in the calendar, and is known as Hock Tide. It is a moveable feast, and is kept on the fifteenth and sixteenth days after Easter. On the first of these days men used to stop female passengers by means of a rope stretched across the road, demanding toll before permitting them to proceed on their way. The second day the women claimed the same right with regard to men. The practice continued down to 1450, when it was prohibited by the Bishop of Worcester.

In the time of Elizabeth plays were performed at Hock Tide, and amongst the illustrious persons who witnessed them was the maiden Queen herself, when on a visit to the Earl of Leicester at Kenilworth Castle in 1575. The origin of the meaning of the word is completely lost in the mists of obscurity, like the reason for observing the day as a festival or holiday of the church. A very peculiar tenure custom of guarding the ward staff was formerly observed on this day by the Lord of the Hundreds of Ongar and Harlow.

The next high day at which we arrive, and the first saint day of the month is Saint George's Day, April the twenty-third. Were it not that this saint holds the rank of patron saint of England, I should hardly have thought it worth while occupying space here for a record of his day. There are two accounts of him, one stating that he was born of Christian parents, and that he suffered martyrdom for his religion under Diocletian, and the other that he was a native of Cappadocia, and was a brave soldier.

However this may be, certain it is that he is held in great veneration throughout the east of Europe, where he is

fabulously reported to have slain a dragon which was ravaging Lydia, and which required to be fed with young women, who drew lots for priority. At length it fell to the lot of the King's daughter to be sacrificed, when Saint George most opportunely arrived, slew the dragon, and delivered the Princess from her peril.

He is the patron of several military Orders of Knighthood, notably that of the Garter, the most coveted in the world, in which he is depicted as slaying the dragon.

It was once customary for people, who wished to be considered fashionable, to wear a blue coat on this day. Country people tell us that

When St. George rides forth in white,
Spring shall know no drought nor blight.

Thus we may be excused for expressing a hope that the twenty-third will witness a fall of snow. But there appears to be another side to this question, for

If the rye be green on St. George's Day,
Fresh bread on St. James's eat we may.

It is undoubtedly best that we should have snow on this day with the bounteous harvest than that the rye should be seen peeping through the ground. It is satisfactory to know that

When St. George's Day is o'er,
Rooks and crows can do no more,

meaning, no doubt, that the wheat has sprouted and so all danger of the crows stealing the seed is removed.

The fishermen amongst the Finns are particularly careful not to be riotous on St. George's Day, believing that such an act would be followed by a terrible tempest at sea.

One of the ancient customs observed on this day was known as "Riding the George." In many parish churches an equestrian statue of the saint was erected, and decorated in a most luxuriant and extravagant manner. The pageant must have been a very imposing one, for it consisted of a procession of gorgeously-arrayed allegorical figures, the principal one representing St. George.

Corporation and City feasts used to be held on this day.

The colours of the Scotch Fusiliers are annually trooped on St. George's Day. Each man wears a white and a red rose, and the roll of the obsolete but dearly cherished order of merit is read out at the head of the battalion. The badge of St. George and the Dragon is said to have been first awarded to the regiment in

1674, when Sir John Fenwick was appointed Colonel.

Saint Mark's Eve, April the twenty-fifth, amongst our simple-minded and exceedingly superstitious predecessors in the land of merry England, enjoyed a somewhat doubtful notoriety as the season of dark divinations. It also possessed many of the privileges awarded by the Scotch to the festival of All Hallow E'en, with regard to love divinations, and with these, I will, as they are the most pleasant, first deal. We have been told by an ancient poet that :

On Saint Mark's Eve, at twelve o'clock,
The fair maid will watch her smock,
To find her husband, in the dark,
By praying unto good Saint Mark.

As the verse stands it is meaningless ; but it refers to a divination, which may thus be explained. It was, once upon a time, customary with young maidens, before going to bed on Saint Mark's mystic eve, at least, such as desired to be gratified by a vision of their future husbands, to hang their chemises—smocks they were called in those days—before the fire as if to air. If the maiden then sat and watched in the dark, her patience or faith was rewarded by seeing a shadowy form, like unto him who was to be her husband, come to the article of clothing and reverse it. If no such form appeared, the maid would die a maid.

The next charm is perhaps well known, and was performed as well on Saint Mark's as All Hallow E'en. A row of sweet chestnuts must be placed on the fire-bars where the heat is greatest, one nut for each maiden. As each nut is placed on the bars the maiden must repeat the name of her lover, and say :

If you love me, pop and fly,
If not, lie there silently.

Thus exhorted, in the event of a faithful lover, the nut would at once pop and fly towards her, if not, it would be consumed.

Watching in the church porch fasting, was one of the superstitions connected with this day, he who did it being rewarded with a sight of all who were destined to die during the year. Very similar, though not quite so gruesome, was the custom of riddling the ashes from the fire on the hearth before going to bed on the eve of Saint Mark. This being done, it was believed that in the morning there would be found impressed there the foot-print of any member of the family who was to die during the year.

At Alnwick, Northumberland, there formerly was practised on Saint Mark's Day a most absurd custom. A legend states that King John had occasion to visit the place, and by some means found himself landed in a dirty pool on the border of the common. Angry at the mishap, he granted a charter, wherein a condition was imposed, that every citizen before being allowed to take up his freedom should pass through the self-same pool. Annually, on Saint Mark's Day, those who were desirous of becoming freemen of the borough used to repair to the pool, known as "Freemen's Well," and, attired in white robes, wearing swords at their sides, walk through it. Having changed their dirt-begrimed clothes for others, they then marched round the common and afterwards made a merry night in the town.

Formerly the common people, we are told, used to gather the leaves of the elder on the last day of April, and thus gathered, they were used for curing wounds, and were affixed to doors and windows to disappoint the charms of witches.

A DAY'S OTTER-HUNTING.

"LOOK alive, gentlemen! Bobbie has taken the 'Bowwows' down," cries the jovial voice of the Master of a certain famous North-country pack of otter-hounds through the open window, round which yellow honeysuckle and shy blush roses are swaying lightly in the early breeze, and peeping slyly into the little inn parlour, where half-a-dozen of us have just breakfasted.

A vigorous stamping into great cow-hide boots, a tightening of knickerbocker buckles, the last button on buff leather gaiters twisted home, a hasty catching-up of long steel-shod ash-spears, and we hasten off after our leader over the mossy, three-arched bridge, under which the brown Leven is sliding with a soft swish, and through the water meadows, scattering myriads of dew diamonds around as we wade ankle-deep in luscious herbage to the river-side. Here on this sweet June morning a compact little crowd is already gathered, showing what a leveller of social exclusiveness is the rare sport of hunting "Lutravulgaris," the graceful, but poaching, otter. The blue knee-breeches and jackets of the Members of the Hunt are freely mixing with the brown fustian of the labourer, and

the "lord of half a shire" is pleasantly discussing the state of the streams with one of his own hinds; sturdy fellows from the slate-quarries up above, and lithe shepherds off the hills fraternise with smart grooms and stable boys, whose masters are somewhere near; whilst in the centre of a knot of gay gallants are two "fayre damozelles"—daughters of a stalwart squire—who inherit to the full the sporting instincts of their ancient house; tall, well-made girls with fresh, bonnie faces and golden hair, which will stray from under their crimson Tam o' Shanters, looking, in their short, rough, home-spun dresses and long boots, the pictures of healthy grace and vigour, as fine and winsome specimens of plucky, well-bred, English gentlewomen as you could wish to see.

But there is a general move, as through the gray dawn-mist which yet lies lightly in the valley, though it is curling swiftly up the steep hill-sides, and disappearing away over the Fell tops, the sixteen couples of big, rough-haired hounds, with massive jaws, and long, drooping ears, trot gaily after the sturdy huntsman.

Leaving "the Whip" to aid "the Master" with the main body, Bobbie fords the river with his particular favourites to the farther shore, and we follow the splashing string through the cool waters, which rush and swirl over knees, and rattle and roll the pebbles under foot; for a wetting more or less is nothing to a real otter-hunter, when many a mile's rough scramble will dry him.

Now the work begins as the pack is laid on, and after a few meaningless whimpers and a rush hither and thither, the beauties are got in hand and move off down stream, searching eagerly every rock, and root, and hollow as they go.

"Are the chances good to-day, Bobbie?"

"Fast-rate! Keeper, he have seen mor'n yan otter lately, and I picked up a foine trout as had a whole neck last noight, I'll swear."

"But don't some say that otters only take the coarser sorts of fish?"

"Ah, folks be allays inventin' of new ideas; and them noospaper chaps don't care what they puts into 'em, so as it fills up, and sells. But it arn't in season a bit. Look ye at it sensible now: I doesn't drink watter when I can get yäle; and otters they arn't so feckless as to eat chub and t'loike when they can tak' salmon an' trout as easy."

And the old fellow chuckles till his jolly

round face becomes almost the colour of his scarlet jacket, and, being in a good temper, condescends to discuss the habits of the great chieftain of the weasel race; and as he strides on, poking and peering into every crannie, he tells many a story of his experiences. How the wily animal knows each drain and culvert for miles around, and how he is so cunning that he shifts his quarters nightly, and never sleeps twice running in the same lair, leaving his wife when hampered by a family to shift for herself; of the curious out-of-the-way places in which otters choose to hide, which makes the tracking of them so difficult, and how one was found inside the rim of a water-wheel.

So we push on through the copses where the young spruces scent the air, and their fragrance is mingled with the aroma of golden honeydew. How thoroughly delicious is the early morning pipe, when its blue cloudlets wreath up into the bluer sky, where, far beyond all ken, many a lark is warbling a greeting of song to Aurora, "the rosy-fingered dawn," and the world around is waking to the crowing of the strutting cock and lowing of the rousing kie.

"Bow, wow, wo-o-o-w," rings out through the fresh intoxicating air, like the chiming of a deep-toned bell, and the sonorous call floats upon the river, and echoes away under the pine-clad heights, and is sent sharply back again.

"Yon's old Ragman, and he never gives tongue for naught," cries Bobbie gleefully, as he swings himself down by a young pollard into the water, and plunges towards a sloping rock where a golden-tan is casting round the "Spoor," and sending out a summons to his comrades who are hastening towards him with muzzles low and tails lifted.

"Hi, Cromwell, foind! Here, Musical Lass, Rollo, Marquis, ho there, foind, foind!"

Away we go, the dogs in and out of the stream, hunting in earnest, for the "drag" is a hot one, through shallows and past deep pools where the mist still hangs, over ditch and bullfinch, and through tangled brake, all excitement and dash.

How the different qualities of men come out strongly as the obstacles thicken and the pace still holds; here cool head, sure eye, and ready nerve carry boldly and safely onward, whilst there excited heedlessness rushes blindly to a fall, and over-cautious timidity is impaled in some tough hedgerow.

Suddenly there is a check in the onward rush, as Cromwell, Raleigh, and Juno spring from the river and take straight up a little stream which comes murmuring through a thick hazel wood. Driving after them, with arms uplifted to guard faces from springing branches, we come upon a veritable "fairy's dell," carpeted with soft velvety moss, where the streamlet leaps over a tiny fern-fringed cliff in a curtain of spray that glitters like a crystal veil in the sunbeams, which pierce the leafy canopy and chequer the sward amber and gold. Here stillness reigns. The elfin band, out of pity for the quarry or to tease the pursuers, have completely hidden the trail and puffed the scent away, for all trace is lost and the knowing hounds are at fault and sniff uneasily about in puzzled silence until called off, when they follow meekly after the huntsman, on whose face a keen sense of wrong unmistakeably sits.

"Cheer up, Bobbie, Musical has hold still on the other side," and we plunge into Leven again, and forge our way waist-deep through its current, against which we hold up on our spears, whilst the dogs swim in a long slant across, with the quiet, powerful strokes for which the real otter-hound is famed.

"Been hunting to heel yonder, eh?" says the Master as we scramble up.

"Two of the rascals about, I reckon," answers Bobbie, as his face broadens into a smile, and he takes a pull at his horn and cracks his long whip with a

"Ho, Musical, good lass. To it Bellman—foind my beauties—Raleigh—Cromwell, foind, foind."

And the pack race in to Musical's side and, with a glorious burst of wild melody which crashes amongst the rocks and rises over the tree-tops, and then echoes and murmurs and dies away amongst the hills, the hunt is up again. Away once more at speed, whilst the clever dogs work rapidly along, scouring every yard of the banks and giving the unseen chase no chance to dodge by lying quiet till they have passed him. But he is evidently well ahead, though it was not an hour since he passed, for the scent is strong, and the pursuit does not slacken, though the miles are being covered one by one, and the valley is widening out into level meads.

"Ware dyke, gentlemen," is the warning hail as a double fence with a ditch yawns right ahead, at which we dash and somehow clear, though an ominous crash and splash

tells that some one has failed and come a cropper. There is a cry:

"The Curate's in."

"Best place too for a Jack Parson I should say," sneers a young fellow who only joined us a short half-mile back, when the Leven curved away from the high road and so obliged him to leave the King's Arms dog-cart in which he was being driven, and from the lofty elevation of which he bestowed many a pitying glance at the huntsmen on foot.

Ah! simple youth, fresh from the quads of John's, nigh to the Cam, thou dost not know that this clay-bespattered figure emerging from its muddy bath, once stroked a mighty Dark-blue Eight to victory off the Ship, and, though a parson, is a right manly one, who does his duty not the worse for being a genial companion at the cover-side, a fatal shot upon the moor, or because he can wield a cricket bat and throw a fly with skill. And though he be not garbed in the startling check knickerbockers and chess-board-patterned stockings, the like of which adorn thy lower limbs, yet know, magnificent youth, that when thou in thy ignorance of this work hast imbibed several quantities of "whisky and soda" at chance publics, and can therefore follow the chase no more, this grey-clad "Jack Parson" will be in at the death, and, after a stiff seventeen miles' grind, will merrily start back homewards, and go a mile or two out of the way to see a bed-ridden old harridan, into whose skinny hands he will empty his pouch of Latakia, so that her black clay pipe may yield the one particle of enjoyment in her lonely, cheerless lot.

"There he is! At him Raleigh, Bugle, Ragman, Buttercup!" rises high the Whip's voice as he sights the game; but there is no need to urge them on, for they are already after him, swimming steadily, circling round, or waiting expectant on either shore. A quivering of the water, a bubbling of air, a dark something slips up and out of the ripples, and the otter has gone to holt amongst the twisted roots of a great sycamore, where he bids defiance to the baffled pack, who bay furiously a few feet out of reach.

"He's only a young 'un, or he'd a shown more foight. Here, Sambo, in wi' ye and bolt him."

A sharp, wire-haired terrier springs with a yelp and wriggles out of sight into the hole. There is a moment's pause, then a terrific scuffling, and otter and terrier come

bounding out in a close embrace and drop into the river.

"Off, dogs! Back, you brutes!" cries Bobbie, leaping into the midst and laying about him fiercely with his terrible thong. Too late! for, before he can come to the rescue, the excited, tumbling pack have killed both terrier and otter; and brave old Bobbie, as he lifts up the lifeless bodies still locked in a close grapple, fairly blubbers out:

"The very best tarrier of 'em all, game little chap. I'll just get 'em stuffed this fashion."

But there is no time to loiter, for the sun is driving his chariot fast across the heavens, and his hot rays will kill all scent; so let us on as fast as we may along the low shores, for already we have reached the tide, and Leven is hurrying to the sea. A pause to try a dyke in that thick plantation, and then over the railway bridge and away for Rusland Pool.

The word "pool," gentle reader, does not, in Westmoreland, mean only a pond or a deep spot in a river, but is applied often to the whole course of a stream, and Rusland is a tributary of the Leven, which winds its narrow but deep channel adown a little valley under the shadow of Furness Fells. It is a curious streamlet, full of deep holes and sunken banks, smart twists and sharp swirls, flowing far from village and hamlet.

The field has now thinned considerably; but the two "fayre maidens," like true nymphs of Great Artemis of the Silver Bow, are still bravely to the front, their skirts and boots telling eloquently how gallantly they have followed the chase, and won great honour and renown by their pluck and wondrous staying powers.

A couple of miles' steady tramp and a halt is called, whilst two energetic Members of the Hunt strike off with Bill the Whip and a quartet of hounds to draw a lonely swamp, a favourite otter-haunt; and the rest of us fling ourselves alongside the dogs upon the turf and await the result. Ten, fifteen minutes!

"If they don't find, we will knock off for the day," says the Master, fingering his leather watch-guard; but, as he speaks, there is a distant baying, which brings us all to our feet as the successful beaters break cover a hundred yards away, driving a fine big otter pell-mell into the pool, and the lone dale rings to the glad cries of men and hounds as we hasten up.

At first, the varmint speeds up stream,

fleet and determined, but either his dash is gone or he bethinks him of shallows above, for at a sullen reach he makes a stand, but gives way and skulks under the bank. Out he is budged, and then he boldly turns and fights, and quickly dives deep, after giving Cromwell an ugly nip; but that tough old hound is not to be thus easily repulsed, and dashes at his assailant the moment he rises, and so for an hour and twenty minutes the battle rages above, below, up and down, whilst the waters gurge, and ripple, and lap noisily amongst the flag roots, and wounds are given and taken freely. But the weight of numbers tells, and there is a rush, a terrific splashing, a fierce, sharp, scurrying tussle; and then the vanquished river pirate dies gamely, with his face to the baying foe, and his strong, cruel teeth in an enemy's shaggy throat, and Bobbie's horn sounds his requiem, which rises and falls, swells and dies away far over hill and dale.

Such is otter-hunting in lovely Lakeland, beneath those everlasting hills, where lone Scafell rears his sovereign crest, and the Langdale Pikes stand like powerful courtiers before him, and grim Helvellyn keeps silent watch and ward at the outer gateway of that mountain world of stone. Given such a country and such streams, with a keen love of muscular exercise, a profound contempt for falls and wettings, genial companions, gallant hounds, and, sometimes at least, the quarry, there is no finer sport in the world than this old English pastime of otter-hunting.

THE COURTENAYS.

A FAMILY this, compared with which Charles the Second's Dukes—the Graftons, the Cleveland, and so forth—are very mushrooms, and even the Russells and Pagets, and others who grew into nobility through the favour of Henry the Eighth and the spoils of the monasteries, are quite parvenus.

For concerning Hugh Courtney—"Short Nose"—who in 1338 inherited from Isabel, sister of Baldwin de Rivers and wife of William de Fortibus, the Devon county history may be consulted. The Riverses (de Ripariis) began in 1120; and, of course, their genealogy is full of legend. It is not till the middle of the fourteenth century that the family in which they were swallowed up comes to the front in the person of Archbishop William. William was the fourth son of Earl Hugh, the son of Isabel de

Fortibus's heir. His mother was the daughter of Humphrey Bohun of Hereford, who had married Elizabeth, daughter of Edward the First. Being thus grandson of "the greatest of the Plantagenets," it is no wonder that he was at once on the high road to preferment.

In his twenty-third year he was chosen Chancellor of Oxford University, in spite of a claim to ex-officio chancellorship on the part of the Bishop of Lincoln. He was made Prebendary of Exeter, Wells, and York, and, in 1339, was appointed Bishop of Hereford, the Pope issuing a special bull to allow so young a man to be bishopped.

He was strongly opposed to the Lollards; at the same time he was anxious to protect the Church from the double oppression of Pope and Crown. Before long he was translated to London; and when the Pope, at war with the Florentines, issued against them a bull pronouncing their excommunication, and authorising the seizure of their property, he published it at Paul's Cross; "for," said he, "I owe canonical obedience to Rome in everything that does not concern the liberties of the Church of England." So the Florentines were banned, and the Londoners, whose jealousy of foreign traders their Bishop was pleased to gratify, pillaged their houses just as if they had been miscreant Jews. This was past bearing; the King took the foreigners under his protection, and cited the Bishop for publishing a papal bull contrary to the laws of England. Courtenay—for so the name had been improved from Courtney—was ordered to unsay at Paul's Cross what he had before said; but he got off by letting one of his apparitors declare from the pulpit that the people had misunderstood him.

Towards the end of Edward's reign there was a great fight between Church and King, in which the Church was standing out for freedom against royal encroachments. The Black Prince, as long as he lived, sided with the Church, and with him were Courtenay and William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester. On the other side were John of Gaunt, the Prince's brother, and Sudbury, who had been Bishop of London before he was promoted to Canterbury. Wycliff was made a tool of in this business; John of Gaunt set him up against the Bishops, and the struggle between him and Courtenay is not very creditable to the Reformer.

Wycliff was cited to appear at St. Paul's

(1377). The Bishops and their friends were in the Lady Chapel; the church was crowded with Londoners. Wycliff entered, supported by John of Gaunt and Earl Percy.

"Marshalmen, clear the way," shouted John of Gaunt, finding it hard to force a passage.

And when the men began batoning the crowd with a will, Bishop Courtenay said:

"He should never have set foot in my church had I known what he was going to do."

"That I will," retorted the Duke, "as often as I please, whether the Bishop wills it or not."

"A seat for Master Wycliff," cried Percy, the Earl Marshal, when at last the party had got into the Lady Chapel.

"Nay, good Earl," replied Courtenay, "it is against both law and reason that an accused clerk should sit in the presence of his judges."

John of Gaunt's face flushed with anger; but he felt the Bishop had the best of it.

"Proud Bishop," he shouted, "I will pull thee down, thee, and all the Bishops in England. Thou trusteth in thy parents, who can profit thee not at all; for they shall have enough to do to defend themselves."

"I trust in God only," replied Courtenay.

"God shall not hinder but that I will drag thee forth by what hair thou hast, if thou speakest so to me," answered Gaunt.

This was too much for the Londoners. The Bishop was popular, and they were not going to see him dishonoured in his own church. Angry cries arose; the multitude swayed to and fro; the Duke and his marshalmen were as playthings in the hands of the enraged citizens; the Court broke up in confusion; and, had not Courtenay interfered—reminding his supporters that Lent was no time for riot and bloodshed—a party of the more violent would have fallen on the Duke and burned his palace of the Savoy. Instead of this they only marched down and reversed his arms.

Gaunt's dignity suffered a good deal that day. The "*Chronicon Angliæ*," p. 119, records with gusto, all the hard things which were said to him by the mob. Such a quarrel was not likely so to end. Gaunt had clapped into the Tower a squire, one Robert Hale, who, escaping, took sanctuary in Westminster Abbey. The Duke's men tried to drag him out, and, in the scuffle, both he and a verger were slain. This was out of Courtenay's jurisdiction; but the Archbishop excommunicated the offenders, and Courtenay solemnly published the

sentence, thrice a week, at St. Paul's. The Council, moved by Gaunt, urged him to desist. He refused, and Gaunt threatened that he would drag the Bishop before the Council, "despite all the ribalds of the city."

Meanwhile, Pope Gregory the Eleventh had sent bulls, urging the Archbishop and Courtenay to do something effectual against Wycliff; but Wycliff had by this time not only the Court party on his side, but also a section of the Londoners. "Nothing, therefore, was attempted for the next four years, during which Pope Urban the Sixth, hard pressed by a general revolt of his Cardinals, offered a Cardinal's hat to Courtenay, as being by family connection the most powerful of the English clergy. But Courtenay was too anxious for Church reforms to wish to become a Pope's nominee. He was more than compensated by being made Archbishop of Canterbury (vice Sudbury, killed in the Wat Tyler rising), and also Chancellor. But he had undertaken that some of the grievances of Wat Tyler's followers should be redressed, and, when Parliament annulled the charters which had been granted them, he resigned the Great Seal.

Parliament next set itself to do what the Pope had failed in: to punish Wycliff. Courtenay was bidden to arraign him less as a heretic than as a disturber of the peace, through the wild conduct of his wandering preachers. So, in 1382, in the Blackfriars' Monastery was held "the Synod of the Earthquake," for, no sooner was the Court opened than the earth shook, in sign of Heaven's displeasure "against Wycliff," said the orthodox, "against the enemies of that holy man," cried the Lollards. Wycliff was condemned, and that Whitsuntide a solemn Litany was chanted in procession round London, to purify the city from heresies. At Oxford, too, the Wycliffites were condemned; some say Wycliff appeared there in person and was admonished. At Leicester, too, Courtenay attacked the Lollards, but contented himself with imposing small penances. He had royal authority to imprison for heresy; for the King had by this time grown convinced that unsoundness in religion meant disaffection in politics.

But though he triumphed over the heretics, Courtenay was bearded by his clergy. While on a visitation in his province, he delayed so long that when he got to Exeter, the period had elapsed during which the ordinary jurisdiction of the Bishops was suspended. Bishop

Brentingham therefore bade his clergy and people pay no heed to the Archbishop; and when he cited this contumacious Bishop to appear before him, the Bishop's men met his apparitor, and forced him to eat the citation, seal and all. Courtenay, however, persisted; and the King sharply rebuked Brentingham and also the Bishop of Salisbury, who had tried the same game.

Jealous of his authority, the prelate was at the same time exceedingly good-natured. When, for instance, the Oxford Benedictines, questioning his claim to visit their house, sent a monk to argue the point, Courtenay asked him to dinner, and afterwards tried to prove that Gloucester College, where the monks lived, was really a college, and therefore subject to him as University Chancellor. But, as they had argued instead of insisting, he waived his right and bade the monks meet him in Saint Frideswide's Church—at present Christ Church Cathedral.

Courtenay is claimed as one of those Churchmen who staunchly resisted the Pope's encroachments; he was active in passing the Statute of *Præmunire*. At the same time, in all things not concerning the liberties of England, he was a true son of Rome. Opposing papal illegalities, he also protested vehemently against Richard's extravagance, and his consequent attempts to seize the revenues of the Church. Indeed, the quarrel between them was so bitter, that he had to fly for his life. The end, however, was not far off. He was chosen one of the eleven Commissioners to regulate the King's expenses; but he died three years before Richard was deposed, having, as long as he lived, endeavoured to make peace between the King and his justly incensed nobles.

William was the most notable of the Courtenays; and the advancement of two of the family was due to him. Edward, Earl of Devon, a nephew, he got made Earl Marshal; and Richard, another nephew, whom he styled "my son and foster child," he set so firmly on the road to preferment, that from Prebendary of Lincoln he was made Dean of Saint Asaph, and then Dean of Wells, and a few years after Bishop of Norwich, having in the meanwhile been chosen to his uncle's dignity of Chancellor of Oxford. He, too, like his uncle, was mixed up with the Wycliffites, but as their champion, or rather the champion of the University against Archbishop Arundel, who wished to hold there an inquisition against heresy.

Oxford, too, owes to him the completion of the library begun by Bishop Cobham, long before Bodley was dreamed of. This Courtenay had always been a fast friend of Henry of Monmouth, and when he became King, was his most trusted counsellor. His nephew Peter became successively Dean of Windsor, Bishop of Exeter, and—on the death of Waynfleet—Bishop of Winchester. He was a strong Yorkist; but, joining Buckingham's party, he was glad to escape to Henry of Richmond in Brittany.

After Bosworth, he got all kinds of profitable honours, such as Keeper of the Privy Seal, at a salary of a pound a day. His kinsman, Edward Courtenay of Boconnock, also exiled through siding with Buckingham, was by Henry the Seventh restored to the Earldom of Devon, the last holder of which title had been attained by Edward the Fourth for joining the Lancastrians. Edward Courtenay's grandson Henry had for his mother Catherine, youngest daughter of Edward the Fourth. He therefore quartered with his own the arms of England and France, an act which helped to bring him to the block in 1538. Henry the Eighth had at first got on admirably with him, taking him to the Field of Cloth of Gold; raising him to the rank of Marquis; and giving him much spoil from many abbeyes. Courtenay, on his part, took the King's side against Queen Catherine; signed the articles against Wolsey; and was Commissioner at Anne Boleyn's trial. But he would not truckle to Cromwell; and Cromwell therefore played on the King's suspicions. "This Courtenay is richer than any other noble; he is a fast friend of those enemies of your Majesty, the Poles and Nevilles. His quartering your royal arms shows that he has high aims." This was enough for Henry. Whether the plot in which Courtenay and the Poles were mixed up, and which Sir Geoffrey Pole betrayed, was real or got up, it is hard to tell. Plots were easily "made to order" in those times. Anyhow, he, his wife, and son were put into the Tower (1538), and he shortly after was beheaded. The Marchioness and her son were treated with high favour by Mary. Indeed, Bishop Gardiner hoped that the Queen might marry young Edward Courtenay, her cousin. He had in a remarkable degree the family good looks, and the match would have been as popular as that with Philip was the reverse; but Mary preferred the Spaniard.

Elizabeth, always attracted by a handsome face, had been fond of Courtenay, even when he was spoken of as her sister's fiancé; and were she and he to get married, popular feeling would, it was thought, very soon put them on the throne in lieu of Philip and Mary. A plot was set on foot: Devon and Cornwall were to rise for Courtenay; Wyatt was to rouse Kent. Wyatt's premature rising ruined everything.

Courtenay was sent back to the Tower—had Mary been like her father, she would at once have beheaded him—and after two years released and exiled. He lived nearly two years at Padua. He was so handsome and winning that Noailles, the French Ambassador, styled him "*le plus beau et le plus agréable gentilhomme d'Angleterre.*" Unhappily he fell into bad habits, and thereby lost the chance of organising among the English exiles an invasion which would probably have been successful. But for his dissolute ways he might have married Elizabeth after all. Poor lad! he had been so long in the Tower, that when he was released, he broke loose. With him the Courtenay Earldom ceased—Blount, Lord Mountjoy, son of Edward Courtenay's mother, was made Earl by James the First—but was ravied two hundred and sixty-five years after in 1831.

The Courtenays, however, though they dropped out of the front rank, still kept a high place among the Western nobility. One of them, Henry Reginald, who in 1797 was made Bishop of Exeter, having previously held the poorer see of Bristol, was almost as great a pluralist as Archbishop William, or Peter of Norwich. He was Prebendary of Rochester, Rector of Saint George's, Hanover Square, Prebendary of Exeter, Archdeacon of the same diocese, besides holding the bishopric aforesaid. Pretty well this, even for "the Georgian era," when, "Both, your Majesty"—the saying with which Dr. Monk met George the Second's question: "Will you have Wells or Bath, Doctor?" (the sees were then separate, and George, no doubt, in his thick German speech, said not Baath, but Boath)—had become the Churchman's motto. He married well, of course, being a Courtenay. His wife was a daughter of the Lord Howard of Effingham of that day. His elder son (William) held the post of Clerk Assistant of Parliament, a noble sinecure; and, in 1838, on the death of his cousin, in whose favour

the title had been revived, he became Earl—the eleventh.

The Bishop's younger son held almost as many lay offices as his father did clerical. He was Secretary to the Commissioners for India, and Vice-President of the Board of Trade, besides being a Privy Councillor, and getting what was for the time the splendid retiring pension of a thousand a year. He alone of the family did anything notable in the literary way. The Courtenays, in general, trusted more to their good looks and blue blood than to their pens; poor Edward, who ought to have been Princess Elizabeth's husband did translate a tract by an Italian Reformer, but he did it with the express object of inducing Edward the Sixth to let him out of the Tower. He failed in this, though the young King read his manuscript; his remarks and signature may be seen on it in the Cambridge University library.

Bishop Henry Reginald published a few sermons, after the fashion of Georgian Bishops; but Privy Councillor Thomas, besides a good many political writings, edited Sir W. Temple's letters, and contributed to the "New Monthly" some good "Commentaries on Shakespeare's Historical Plays." Yes; there was one more author in the family—John, son of William Courtenay, and brother of the William for whom, in 1831, the title was revived. His mother was a Stuart, daughter of Lord Bute, and from her he inherited a liveliness which made him one of the most telling House of Commons speakers towards the close of the century.

In those days it was "the thing" to bring in neatly, in one's speech, a bit of Virgil or Horace. John Courtenay improved on this custom by improvising an original Sapphic verse, and a very apposite one, too. John was in opposition—had ironically opposed while really supporting several of Fox's Bills, notably one for giving a freer hand to the Irish Parliament. A Navy Bill was before the House, and the Treasury Bench was dumb, while the Opposition was making speech after speech. The Secretary to the Treasury—Rose—ought to have answered, and John Courtenay tried to stir him up with the appeal:

Quid lates dudum, Rosa? Delicatum
Effer e terris caput, O tepentis
Filia cœli!

(Why so long hiding, Rose? Lift from out the ground thy dainty head, thou daughter of the warm sun!) The House was con-

vulsed; that ponderous Rose should be so apostrophised was irresistible. Only Rose himself, not understanding Latin, could not make out what every one was laughing at, and was, of course, unable to reply.

John made such a violent speech against Warren Hastings, so full of personal reflections, that he had to apologise. He had even gone so far as to charge the King (a mere German princelet in the eyes of the lords of Powderham Castle, the kinsmen of the Edwards and the Henrys) with being bribed by Hastings.

Liberal or even Radical throughout, he was the "enfant terrible" of an unimpeachable Tory and well-conducted family.

He opposed Pitt's restrictions on Irish trade, telling him, in a humorous speech, his policy was worthy of the worst of the Plantagenets. He was heartily with Wilberforce against the slave-trade; and opposed the suspension of Habeas Corpus in 1794, and the renewal of the Suspension Act four years after. His "Philosophical Reflections on the French Revolution" (strongly in sympathy with the revolutionists) went through three editions. His "Speculations of Jeffry Wagstaffe, Esq., of Dublin," show that he was a Home Ruler a century before the time. He wrote poems, too; and very amusing "Sketches of the Chief Speakers in the House, since 1780."

Altogether the cross of Stuart blood had been so useful that one is sorry his only son died before him.

So much for the Courtenays or Courtneys, perhaps the only English family that can be called typically feudal. Their position was always rather due to their being Courtneys than to any special endowments, though the Archbishop must have been a very able man, as was also the Bishop Peter of Norwich.

The name was adopted in 1837 by that strange madman, John Thom, the Kentish labourer. He, like the cobbler who claimed to be true head of the Cavendishes, and the mason who said he was heir to Stoneleigh Abbey, and that Lord Leigh was only a pretender, asserted that he was the real Courtenay. Probably the noise made by the contest for the Earldom a few years before had got into his muddled brain. Poor fellow! he claimed to be something more, giving out that he was Heaven's vicergerent and invulnerable, and that under his leading the labourers would be sure of good wages and general comfort. The strangest thing is that many believed in

him, and actually stood up with him against the police to shoot and to be shot down.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER XV.

AN OLD FRIEND AND A NEW SLAVE.

PAUL'S troubled face, when Mrs. Percival saw him, showed plainly enough how he felt his first real difference with Celia.

"I've had a telegram," he began quickly. "You know? You have seen Celia?"

"I have just come from her. I am so sorry, Paul. May I see the telegram?"

He put it into her hand, and began walking restlessly up and down the room, looking on the floor.

"Dr. Graves; I have heard his name: who is he?" said Mrs. Percival after a minute.

"Don't you remember? The doctor at Wilford, who attended my father till we had the London man."

"Not an alarmist?"

"Oh no; a sensible old chap. Well, I don't call that telegram alarmist, do you? He puts it as mildly as he can. Perhaps you don't see what should make one anxious? I have never known the Colonel ill before; that's true: but to my mind that makes it worse. People like him break down suddenly, don't they? Then why should Graves have telegraphed instead of writing? The Colonel must have let out that he wanted to see me. In fact, I think I ought to go."

As he said this, he looked up at her almost wistfully. Evidently it was a terrible business altogether; he was torn between love and loyalty to his old friend and the passion for Celia which made it hard to resist her least wish, harder still to go away and leave her. Perhaps he was already half-regretting that he had telegraphed back in such a hurry. But he told Mrs. Percival nothing of all this, only looking at her with anxious, tired, puzzled eyes; would she take the same view as Celia?

"Of course you must go," said Mrs. Percival quietly. "I have no doubt he wants to see you; why, he has nobody but you in the world. I wish I could go too; but that would be foolish. I don't really

feel anxious, you know, Paul. He has always been so strong, such a wiry sort of man; I feel sure he will rally from this, whatever it is. But I have no doubt he is nervous about himself. Yes, you must go, and come back as soon as you can, to take us home. Celia will miss you dreadfully; but I shall not. I shall be much too busy, and there's one advantage in your going away: Celia will be able to think a little about her shopping."

She ended with her kindest and sweetest smile.

"Thanks; you are very comforting," said Paul; but he sighed.

"Now tell me about your plans," said Mrs. Percival. "I suppose you are going by the mail to-night. Have you told Jules? Have you ordered your dinner? I had better ring at once."

"Oh, lots of time for that," said Paul.

Then he took another turn along the room, and came back, and stood still before her.

"Have you talked it over with Celia at all?" he asked.

"Not much," said Mrs. Percival. "I came away to find you, almost directly she told me."

He looked on the floor silently. Mrs. Percival felt angry with Celia, for she understood his thoughts well; but now she did not think it advisable to repeat the encouraging remarks she had made at Holm.

These lovers must arrange their own affairs now; she thought she could trust Celia for coming to her senses. She would certainly have smiled if she could have known what cruel words they were that went on ringing in Paul's ears. "You talk so much about loving me. That's all very fine. If you really love me, you wouldn't go away and leave me on such an excuse as this." Paul was very young, and quite inexperienced; these words of Celia's tormented him terribly. How was he to prove his love? How was he to show her that she was mistaken? It was a dreadful difficulty. But he did not confide it to Mrs. Percival.

Presently Timms came in, and brought Celia's message, at which Paul's face brightened a little; though both he and Mrs. Percival were startled at her having escaped alone to the Convent. It was too late to overtake her now; but, some time before the service could be supposed to have ended, Paul ran down the stairs on his way to the church, stopping at the

bureau to give some order about his departure.

There were often people talking to Monsieur or Madame Dupont in the bureau; at this moment a tall man stood there under the gaslights, deeply engaged in turning over the visitors' book in search of acquaintances.

"Percival," he said in a low tone to himself. "Romaine—mais, Romaine! Madame, who is he, this Monsieur Romaine you have got staying in the hotel? Is he English—a fine young fellow with dark eyes?"

"Ma foi, Monsieur," cried Madame Dupont, as she sat, fat and smiling, knitting in her corner; "you have only to turn your head and see for yourself."

So Achille de Montmirail turned round and found himself face to face with his old acquaintance, Paul Romaine. He seized both his hands and wrung them with unfeigned delight.

"Going away to-night! Impossible; nothing of the kind! My dear friend, I shall treat you as you would treat me if you caught me in England. You shall come and stay with me. I am living in that house opposite with my mother-in-law, the Vicomtesse de Ferrand. She will be charmed to see you. You really must go? Well, at least, let me introduce you to her and my daughter. You will dine with us? We will dine at six, if you please, and let you go in time for your train. But how much better if you would put off going till to-morrow morning. The old friend is not so very ill? It is nothing immediate? Well, surely, if you are in London to-morrow evening——"

"Thanks, you are most awfully good. I wish I could dine with you, but I can't even do that," said Paul.

It was impossible not to respond to M. de Montmirail's friendly warmth; but surely some evil genius had brought him on the scene just then. If people do not appear till too late, they had better not appear at all. On this evening, of all evenings, M. de Montmirail was most horribly in the way. He might, perhaps, hinder the farewell talk with Celia—the last attempt at an understanding. She had given Paul the opportunity by telling him to meet her at the church door; and, as it was not raining, Paul had already planned that he would ask her to take a turn with him in the gardens beyond. But with this friendly and hospitable Frenchman on his hands, what was he to do?

He murmured something about having an appointment, as the Marquis took his arm and walked with him across the courtyard.

"Certainly. I will not delay you. But which way are you going? I may as well walk a few yards with you."

"Well, I am only going a few yards," said Paul in despair. "I am going to meet a lady at the church gate across there."

"Mais parfaitement!" cried Achille. "It is the very thing that I should do if I were a good boy. My mother-in-law and my daughter are there at this moment. I took them there, and turned back from the gate. Not from unbelief, as you know—you remember our talk about these things—but because Sainte Monique is supposed to belong to the ladies. Shall we walk there together, then? And now tell me, has anything happened to you since we met in England? Nothing very important? Nor to me. And the old house in Surrey is just the same, is it? Some day, when I am in England again, I mean to pay you a visit there."

"I hope you will," said Paul. "I shall be very glad to see you. Just at present my house is by way of being done up and made very smart, because I am going to be married."

"I am rejoiced to hear that, my dear friend," said Achille cordially. "I shall have the pleasure, then, of paying my homage to the charming Madame Romaine. Charming I know she must be, for you are a man of good taste. She is beautiful, too, no doubt? One of the belles of the Woolsborough country?"

Paul told him who she was, and also that in a few minutes he hoped to introduce him to her. He was beginning to feel a little more cheerful. In M. de Montmirail's atmosphere of sunny kindness, everything took a brighter hue; and while Paul talked to him of Celia, remembering what a real right she had to be called charming, remembering, too, the happy experiences of the last few days, he began to think that this shadow must certainly soon pass away. After all, why was Celia angry at his going to England? Because she did not want him to leave her. Was that a state of things to be complained of by Celia's lover?

The service was not yet over, and Paul walked up and down the Rue Sainte Monique several times with his friend, telling him all his plans and doings, to which the

Frenchman listened with sympathetic ears. Naturally, perhaps, Paul was rather wrapped up in himself; he was also totally without curiosity, which has its good side, like other vices, and sometimes makes an important element in friendship; so that it hardly occurred to him to ask M. de Montmirail anything of his own doings, or of his old house down in the west. Achilles, in his good-nature, was not at all surprised at this one-sided state of things, perceiving that the nice English boy was so deeply in love that he could think of nothing else.

"C'est amusant!" he thought to himself. "What a happy fellow!"

"I am beginning to think," he said presently, "that I have already seen Mademoiselle Darrell. A young lady came from the Deux Frères and followed us as far as the church; she went in at the same time as my mother-in-law and Antoniette. She was quite a distinguished young lady, and, as she passed me, I thought she was amazingly beautiful. I thought, too, that she was English. I have seen the type there, though never such a face as hers. And, if you will forgive me, no French demoiselle of such an appearance would be allowed to make three steps in Paris alone. Even with your English ideas, my friend, you will see that it is hardly to be advised. Madame her aunt, or at least her *bonne*—"

"I ought to have been with her," said Paul, quickly, "but I did not know she was gone."

"You! Oh well, yes, being English, one forgets your ideas a little," said the Marquis, smiling. "You think I was right, then? The English beauty that I saw was Mademoiselle Darrell?"

"I think there is no doubt about it," said Paul.

"Then let me say that you are a very fortunate man."

Achille de Montmirail looked at the young fellow by his side with astonishment, mixed with respect; there might have been a little envy too, if his character had been less amiable.

"Is the beauty in love with him, I wonder?" was the thought that flashed into his mind.

Celia's looks had struck him even more than he chose to say. He honestly liked Paul very much, and thought him superior to most of the young Englishmen he had met; but somehow he did not seem the right man to marry a woman with a face like that.

"She will lead you a life, my friend," he thought. "There is something of the devil in that woman, or I am very much mistaken. You are a poet, a dreamer, an enthusiast, with the best heart in the world, and she will take your heart in her hands and break it for you. No, you are not the man for her, and I doubt seriously if she does more than tolerate you, even now. Her uncle and aunt have made the marriage; you are rich, and she is probably poor. I see it all. Well, your married life will not be a tame business, as mine would have been, if *la petite* had not interfered. And you may be happy for six months, or perhaps a little longer. After all, who knows? The game may be worth the candle!"

So thought the Marquis while Paul talked to him, and while they passed up and down the pavement outside the lighted Convent gates.

Presently these were opened, carriages drove up, the small congregation of ladies came out of the church door and down the narrow stony passage. Celia came among the first, and Paul stepped forward to meet her; at the sight of her, his misgivings suddenly returned. He did not know whether she was still angry with him; but she met him with a smile.

"So you came," she said in a low voice. "Have you been waiting long? I thought the service was going on till midnight; but the singing was divine. I wished you were there."

"Didn't you know I should come?" said Paul.

"How could I tell," she said, still smiling, "when I had been so disagreeable! Come, what are we waiting for?"

While these few words were passing between them, M. de Montmirail had turned aside for a moment to speak to some lady he knew. But she was gone now, and he came up to Paul and Celia. Madame de Ferrand and Antoinette had not yet appeared. Celia looked at him with astonishment.

"M. de Montmirail would like to be introduced to you," said Paul. "You know how I hoped I might meet him again."

"Oh yes, I am so glad," said Celia. She held out her hand to the Marquis, who made her a very low bow, and just touched the tips of her fingers with his own.

"Mademoiselle, it is the greatest honour and pleasure—my mother-in-law, the Vicomtesse de Ferrand, and my little

daughter. Ma mère, you remember hearing of my English friend, M. Romaine. Let me present him to you. I met him accidentally half-an-hour ago at the Deux Frères. He has told me his history, and has given me the happiness of being acquainted with Mademoiselle Darrell."

It was not often, in Madame de Ferrand's agreeable and benevolent life, that she found herself hopelessly puzzled. Achilles' English friends and connections did not interest her particularly, and among them she could not recall the name of Romaine.

But under the lamp at the gate she saw two young English people, looking, as far as she could see, perfectly *comme-il-faut*, and quite at home in the situation. Achilles seemed to be in raptures, and she always made it a rule to be civil to his acquaintances. It was nothing new for him to discover hidden treasures at the Hôtel des Deux Frères. So she made a low curtsy and several polite speeches, her sweet little pale face looking very amiable, and trotted off down the street with Celia by her side, while Antoinette took her father's arm as he and Paul followed.

Antoinette's bright eyes and quick ears were everywhere. She was charmed to see the little Englishman at last, though certainly it was true he was by no means little. But she could not pay him quite so much attention as if he had appeared alone, for the prospect of really making acquaintance with Celia was almost too entrancing to be real. Wonderful castles were suddenly built in Antoinette's head, as she followed that graceful figure down the street. It did not at all occur to her young French mind that Celia was Paul Romaine's fiancée—his sister, she thought, not having realised the difference of names.

They parted, with many politenesses, at the gate of the Hôtel Sainte Monique. The ladies went in, and M. de Montmirail crossed the road with Paul and Celia.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "why do you let him run away to England to-night? It is too mortifying for me only to meet him and lose him."

"I don't want him to go," said Celia, in her sweetest voice and manner. "But he thinks it is his duty, and I suppose people must do what they think is their duty, monsieur. He has a dear old friend who is ill, you see."

What an angel she was, after all!

When M. de Montmirail was gone, they stood still for a minute in the lighted courtyard, looking after his vanishing figure.

"Well, you have got one nice friend, at all events," said Celia, turning to Paul with a radiant smile.

"Do you like him? I'm glad," said Paul. "I thought you didn't care for Frenchmen."

"I don't generally. But this one is so thoroughly nice, and so very good-looking. His manners are rather demonstrative, certainly—but they are only pretty, not ridiculous."

"You made a tremendous impression on him," said Paul, smiling, and gazing at her with a sort of wonder; she seemed to have forgotten her vexation with him, as if it had never been.

"Did I? That is delightful. And on the old Vicomtesse too, I flatter myself. She asked me so prettily to come and see her, and to bring my aunt. But the child—did you notice the child, Paul?"

"I saw her, of course. I forget what she was like."

"How stupid of you! You certainly are one of the blindest people. I thought you liked looking at pretty things."

"I was thinking of beautiful things, and sad things. I had no room for pretty things."

Celia paused for a moment. "Look here," she said, "this courtyard is not the place to talk nonsense in. We must go in—or if you like, if you have time, shall we have a little walk first?"

"Just what I was hoping for," said Paul. "If that family had not seized upon us, I meant to ask you to come with me into the garden."

"Let us go there now," said Celia.

As they walked up the street she went on talking about Antoinette de Montmirail, and telling Paul how pretty she was, what a charming little creature.

"I am sure she is older than she looks," she said. "Her mother must have been very dark and very pretty. She is dead, isn't she?"

"Yes, long ago. The girl is fourteen; he told me so."

"I wonder he has not married again."

"I believe he thinks himself rather too poor. They think so much of money in France, you know."

"Well, they are quite right; life is an awful thing without it. But I wonder some heiress has not married him—some pretty little snob with an immense fortune. There must be hundreds of them who would be only too delighted."

"He would not be delighted," said Paul. "I fancy he thinks a good deal of his family. He won't sell himself."

"He seems to be a sort of hero all round."

"I rather think he is—I don't know."

The Jardin Sainte Monique was solitary at that season, and that time of day. The trees stretched their bare arms rather low over the broad gravel-walks, which were very damp, and would have been very dark, too, but for the lamps, of which there were a good number. The seats under the trees would have been delightful on a summer evening; they now shone in the lamp-light with dreary, wet reflections, and nobody but distracted lovers would have dreamed of sitting down on them. Celia, certainly, was not likely to run such a risk. To be in the garden at all was a wild enough flight for her. She had no idea of staying there long, though she wanted to send Paul away happy. She went on chattering a little more about her new acquaintances, as she walked with him along the wet crunching gravel. His answers became shorter and more absent every minute. At last they both dropped into silence. A very little of this was enough for her, in her state of strung excitement and impatience. She was rather angry that Paul did not seem able to follow her lead, and take things up where they had been before, without a tiresome explanation. But she supposed that the silly fellow must be humoured.

"Well," she said in her softest voice, "what is the matter now?"

"Have you forgiven me?" said Paul.

"Don't you think you are a little bit stupid? Why should we talk about forgiving? If I was cross, I am sorry—and you may give my love to the Colonel, and tell him to get better directly, or I will never speak to him again—and don't be tragical for heaven's sake."

The words were heartless enough; but there are ways of saying things which alter their meaning very effectually, and the way in which Celia said all this was perfectly sweet to Paul.

"Yes, I am stupid," he said, "a great deal too stupid for you—because you said something this afternoon which has been making me perfectly wretched ever since. Don't you know what it was?"

"No, indeed," she said. "I haven't the faintest idea. Tell me."

"You said—that if I loved you, I shouldn't go away and leave you on such an excuse as this."

There was a moment's pause, then Celia gave a little laugh.

"My dear Paul," she said, "I say a thousand things in the day which I don't mean, and certainly that was one of them. You will have to study the subject, and find out which they are, because I can't always explain. Of course, I am not glad you are going. I am very sorry; I think it is great nonsense, though it may be right. I hope the Colonel will agree with me, and send you back at once. I want you a great deal more than he does. No, make yourself happy; I didn't mean that nasty thing; how could I? You care for me too much, not too little. Some day you will find out that I am not good enough for you. Now let us go back; it's horribly cold, and we have had enough of this. No more explanations, please. I'm not in the right state of mind for them. In Paris one lives and enjoys; one doesn't think and explain."

"Do you love me?" Paul said. Somehow he could not bear that quarter of an hour to come to an end.

"Why do you make me say things over and over again?" she said. "I will answer no more of your questions till you come back; then I shall have a great many things to tell you. Now say good-bye, and be happy."

"May I really be happy?"

"You are a very unreasonable creature to be anything else," said Celia; and as Paul kissed her, there under the dark trees, he knew that she was right, and that no mortal man could be happier.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 1888.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XVII. MAY'S INTERCESSION.

NEXT morning Fred was roused out of a sound sleep by Gower, who had hurried up, after a pretence of breakfasting, to his friend's room.

"Yes?" Fred grunted, half-asleep.

"It's all up! Governor has found it out," replied Gower, handing him a letter.

Fred took the letter mechanically, while his eyes remained fixed with a bewildered expression of mixed inquiry, incredulity, and horror in them upon his friend's face.

"He must have found it out through his bank-book. He's always getting it posted up."

Fred still stared up at him as though he had hardly taken in what was said, while the letter trembled in his hand unlooked at.

"I'm very sorry," continued Gower in a tone of exculpation. "But you ought to have told me in time, you know." Fred tossed him the letter, lay back in bed, with his face turned away and half-buried in the pillow, and said only in a strained, strange tone, "Read it."

"DEAR AUGUSTUS,—A cheque I sent you for eight pounds has been altered to eighty pounds, and cashed for that amount by your friend, Beresford, as I find from the endorsement. I have put the matter into the hands of my lawyer, and I write only to warn you against the company you are keeping. Your affectionate father,

"GEORGE GOWER"

Fred lay still as a stone, with hidden face, saying nothing.

"I had got up early, and had packed to

start by first train," Gower continued self-defensively. "If you had only told me in time!" Still Fred neither stirred nor spoke. "It would be no use my writing," Gower went on in the same excusatory tone, "for he's like a mad bull with gout; and that hundred pounds——"

"It's all right. Would you mind leaving me alone?" Fred said at last, without moving, in a strangely quiet tone.

"But what on earth's to be done?"

"Good Heavens!" cried Fred, starting up in savage impatience, and presenting to Gower a face so ashy, wild, and fierce, that he hardly recognised it. "Good Heavens! Will you——" Then with a sudden change to calmness, he added: "Do leave me alone, like a good fellow."

Gower left the room gently, as though in the presence of sickness, closed the door behind him noiselessly, and crept downstairs. When he reached the bottom he paused, and turned to reascend. Fred's face, vividly before him, had suddenly and certainly suggested suicide. At this moment May came out of the breakfast-room, and Gower turned at once to her in great agitation.

"Oh, Miss Beresford, your brother——"

"He's ill?" cried May, seeing terrible news in Gower's face.

Without another word she flew past him upstairs with all the fleetness of fear.

More madly in love with her than ever, Gower turned his thoughts from Fred's scrape to the bearings of it upon his suit. He went out into the garden to think things over with the help of a cigar, and the more he thought on them, the more resolute he became to risk all his father's wrath and even to sacrifice his favour, and so much of the paternal inheritance as depended upon it, for May's sweet sake. Presently he

forgot Fred, and his father, and gave himself up to delicious day-dreams of May, till he longed to speak of her to anyone, or to hear anyone speak of her to him—even Con! Now, though there was no subject on which Con generally loved so much to talk as May, nothing could drag him into a conversation about her with Gower.

"What rose was that Miss Beresford wished for the other day, O'Neil?"

"Rose! Sorra a use wishin' for a rose here."

"But I should be glad to get it for her."

"An' maybe ye'd be so good as to get her a bit o' sun wid it an' a bit of soil."

"Oh, you mean it wouldn't grow here! It's a poor climate."

"Climate! Begor, ye may call it a climate, but I call it a chimbley wid a bit of fire at the top—that's what I call it. A chimbley wid a bit of sun at the top of it that the flowers can hardly see through the shmoke, or feel through the soot."

"It's not like the Emerald Isle," rejoined Gower.

"It was good on ye to lave us the colour of the grass," Con retorted, in a tone which suggested that if the beauty of the country had been as transportable as its wealth, it also would have been transferred to England.

"I'm afraid it's you that have made Miss Beresford a rebel, O'Neil."

"Me! 'Tisn't for the likes of me to make anny wan a rebel; it's only a sarvant I am; an' rebels isn't made by sarvants, but by masthers—by 'masthers,' he reiterated emphatically. "That's how rebels is made; it is so."

"You mean that it was Miss Beresford made you a rebel?" Gower replied fatuously.

"Ye take me up too sharrp intirely," retorted Con sarcastically. "Sorra a bit of a rebel I am no more nor yerself. Every man for his own country."

"I wonder you ever left your country to come over here at all."

"Ay; an' ye might be afther wondherin' why this bit o' grundsel iver left the gardin for the ash-pit," Con retorted, tearing up by the root the groundsel as he spoke and flinging it over the wall into the ash-pit. "Needs must when the divil dh rives," they say."

"Oh, you were evicted? I thought you had come over with the Vicar."

"Ay, I was evicted. But, plase Heaven, I'll live to see thim evicted that done it!"

"The landlords!"

"Ach, landlords! Sure landlords is only a pack of curs that barks whin their mather's behind 'em. They'll tuck their tails betune their legs an' run fasht enough whin their mather's gone. A cur's courage is his mather's shadow."

"Oh, it's us you mean to evict!" cried Gower, laughing at the absurdity of the idea. "How long notice to quit will you give us?"

"It's yerselves that ill be givin' notice to lave before long, I'm thinkin'."

Gower, feeling political discussion to be out of his way, and caring only to hear Con's idolatrous opinion of May, tried again and in vain to get him upon that topic. Con did not seem even to know, or to care to know, her favourite flowers.

"All ladies is fond of flowers—of pluckin' 'em, anyway," he added cynically, with the grudging air of your true gardener. Nor was he in the least disconcerted by May's appearance at this moment.

"O'Neil is just saying ladies like flowers only for the pleasure of plucking them," Gower said to her as she approached them.

"Ay, as childhre likes to kill butther-flies," Con added, with an assumption of sourness.

But May, taking no notice of either remark, said with uncontrollable agitation to Gower:

"I wanted to see you for a moment, Mr. Gower, about something—about Fred."

Gower turned to walk with her towards the far end of the garden.

A word to explain this interview.

May, hurrying headlong up to Fred's room, and receiving no answer to her knocks, cried fearfully, "Fred!"

"What?" he almost shouted.

"May I come in?"

Receiving no answer she turned the handle with trembling hands, and entered. Shutting the door hastily but noiselessly behind her she hurried to the bed, and laid her hand timidly on Fred's shoulder. He was lying with his face on his arm and seemed insensible to her presence or her touch.

"Fred, what is it?" she said imploringly. "Are you ill?"

Though he remained still and silent for some seconds, he had so far recovered from his stupefaction as to be able to think of turning her terror and devotion to account.

"I wish I were dead; I wish to Heaven I were dead," he groaned at last.

May sank into a chair by the bed, and cried tremulously:

"What has happened? What is it?"

"I can't tell you; it's utter ruin and disgrace!"

May put out her trembling hand to lay it gently on his head.

"I don't mind so much for myself," Fred said presently, "but it will kill mother."

"Is it money?" May was able to say after a pause.

"Money! It's—it's—oh, I can't tell you what it is. It's seven years' penal servitude."

Fred felt the hand upon his head grow cold. When she had sufficiently recovered from her stupefaction to be able to think at all, her thought was of her father.

It is at such a moment that you realise beyond all question who it is that you love best in the world—yourself or another, and what other.

May could think, at first, only of her father—not of herself, or of Fred, or of her mother. This would simply and certainly kill her father, she thought.

"Can nothing be done?" she asked at last in a desolate voice.

"I can do nothing; and I can't ask Gower."

"Mr. Gower! Could he do anything?"

"He could make it all right if he liked."

"But he won't? You have asked him?"

"No, I can't ask him; we've had a row, and I couldn't bring myself to ask him; and he wouldn't do it for me if I did."

"Oh, Fred, do ask him; you must ask him; I'm sure he'll do it for you; he thinks so much of you, and he is so good-natured. Do ask him, Fred."

"What's the good of talking like that when you know nothing about it?" Fred cried petulantly.

This silenced May for a moment, but presently she asked:

"Couldn't it be prevented in any other way?"

"I told you it couldn't."

"And could he do it without injuring himself?"

"He could just do it with a stroke of his pen."

"Fred, it will break father's heart."

"Do you suppose I haven't thought of that," Fred interrupted her to cry. "Of course it's nothing to you that my life is ruined—seven years in jail, and the hunted life of a jail-bird ever after—that's nothing to you!"

"Oh, Fred!"

"Well, it isn't, compared with what you think about father."

"I only mentioned him because I knew you would think about him and mother more than about yourself."

"And you. I've all to think about till I'm nearly mad. I might have been out of it all by this time if you hadn't come in."

At this threat of suicide May lay back in the chair with closed eyes. Here Fred, turning towards her and seeing her with closed eyes and white to the lips, lying back in the chair, thought she had fainted.

"May!"

"Yes."

"I thought you had fainted. Look here, May, I haven't committed murder. I only did what any other fellow would have done, who was as hard driven as I was. I altered the figure on a cheque of Gower's father, thinking I could make it all right in a day or two; but, by the most infernal ill-luck, I couldn't stop it in time."

"He's found it out?"

"Yes, he's found it out, and has put it into his lawyer's hands."

"But if you wrote and explained, and offered to pay back the money?"

"Oh, you don't know him; he's a beast, and a wild beast when he's angry, and he's just furious about it. Gower could make it right, but no one else."

"Does Mr. Gower know of it?"

"Of course he knows of it. It was to him his father wrote."

"And didn't he offer to do anything?"

"No; I told you that we had a row, and that I couldn't bring myself to ask him, even if I thought he would do it; but he wouldn't, I know."

"Oh, Fred, I'm sure he would."

"Well, ask him, then, if you like," Fred answered in the tone of a sullen concession.

"But for you! He'd do it for you, I'm sure."

"You ought to know!" he answered with contemptuous sarcasm.

After a few more appeals of this kind, to which Fred was doggedly deaf, May was artfully led by him to offer herself to plead to Gower for his intercession. It was only his intercession she supposed she was to plead for, whereas Fred knew perfectly well that Gower's mere intercession would be worse than worthless. Nothing short of Gower's taking the forgery upon himself would make his father pause; and it was for this Fred sent his unconscionable sister to plead.

May was amazed and much relieved to find Gower so light of heart, as to jest with Con and with herself. Evidently he either meant, of himself, to intercede with his father, or he thought intercession unnecessary. He could not be in such spirits if he believed the prosecution of his friend by his father probable, or even possible. This conviction made her enterprise seem immeasurably lighter to May.

As they walked away from Con May began: "Fred has told me about this."

"It's a bad business," he answered, sympathetically.

"But Sir George Gower won't really do it!" she said, appealingly.

"I am afraid he will; he would do anything when he's annoyed, and he's terribly annoyed about this."

"It will kill father. Mr. Gower, couldn't you write and intercede for him? I cannot tell you what a kindness it would be."

"Of course I would write if it wouldn't do him a deal more harm than good. At best of times the Governor minds me no more than his dog, and now he's furious with me about that debt of mine he's just had to pay."

"But Fred thinks that you could make it right if you wrote," May pleaded.

"Do you mean, wrote to ask the Governor not to go on with it?" asked Gower, in a surprised tone.

"Yes."

"He couldn't mean that; he couldn't, indeed. He knows as well as I do, that it would only spur the Governor on."

"Oh, what shall we do? Do you think if father—— Oh, I don't know what to do!" May cried piteously.

"There's only one way I can think of——" Gower began.

"Hush! Here's, father—— Oh, pray, pray Mr. Gower do it if it can be done."

"There's nothing in the world I wouldn't do for you," he whispered.

"Fred not down yet?" said the Vicar.

"I was just going to see him, sir," Gower answered, nodding reassuringly at May behind the Vicar's back.

"Well, and what do you think of doing to-day?"

"I have a letter to write home," Gower replied, with a meaning look at May, "and he will be up and ready to take me off your hands by the time it's written. I really feel quite ashamed of having taken up so much of your time, sir, and of Miss Beresford's."

As Gower walked away the Vicar said,

"He really is a very good-natured fellow; it's a pity he hasn't some brains; but brains and good-nature are as seldom to be found together."

With a mind so miserably preoccupied, May had neither ear nor speech even for her father, from whom she presently made her escape upon some household pretext.

"What's the matter wid Miss May this mornin', yere rivrence?" asked Con as the Vicar was passing him.

"Miss May? Nothing; nothing that I know of. Why?"

"I thought she wasn't lookin' so well," Con answered evasively. "An' so Misther Fred's come back."

"Yes, he's come back."

"An' well? An' doin' well?" Con asked.

"As well as usual," answered the Vicar in a tone that showed he knew nothing of any such terrible trouble as Con thought he read in May's face when she told Gower, in his hearing, that she wished to speak about Fred to him.

"He'll be able to look afther that young gentleman himself now, inshtead of Miss May takin' him out in a perambulator! He's a fine young gentleman—he is so!" Con said with a grin.

"You haven't taken to him, I'm afraid, Con."

"Taken to him! Sure it isn't for the likes of me to be takin' to a grand English gentleman! 'O'Neil,' says he to me just now, shtandin' where yere rivrence is, 'O'Neil,' says he, 'you're a rebel,' says he. 'An' what's that, sir?' says I. 'A man that's disloyal to his country,' says he. 'Ireland's my country, sir,' says I. 'Pity ye didn't shtay in it,' says he. 'Pity I wasn't left in it, sir,' says I. 'Oh, you were evicted, were you?' says he, laughing at the fine joke. 'There's a better joke nor that, sir,' says I. 'An' what's that?' says he. 'Thim that done it 'ill not be left long afther me,' says I. 'The landlords!' says he. 'The landlords' masthers, sir,' says I. 'You mane us, the English!' says he. 'Begor, I do, sir,' says I. 'So ye're goin' to kick us out,' says he, as well as he could for the laughin'. 'Ye'll need no more kickin' nor a cur wid a can tied to his tail,' says I. 'What do you mane?' says he. 'Ye'll be glad to get out of it,' says I, 'an' that's what I mane.' 'It's a dale more bother nor it's worth,' says he. 'Ye have it as ye made it,' says I. 'There was nothin' to be made of it,' says he; 'an' ould bog-hole,' says he, 'that another

bucket or two of wather would sink in the say,' says he. 'An' what do ye call this counthry?' says I; 'a kitchen chimbley where the air is all shmoke, an' the soil all soot,' says I. 'It's nothin' to the Emerald Isle!' says he. 'Ay,' says I, 'ye left us the colour of the grass, but divil a much else ye've left afther sivin hunerd years' lease of the place.' 'We're not gone yet,' says he. 'Ye're undher notice, though,' says I, 'an' it's little compensation for improvements 'ill be due to ye when ye go!' An' that's throe, yere rivrence, 'tis so," Con added in conclusion.

"You always get the best of the battle, Con, when it's your own shadow you fight with," the Vicar said, smiling.

"Arra, yere rivrence, it's not manin' that I made it all up ye are?"

"Most of it, Con. Maybe the seed was his, but the soil it grew in was yours, and a very fine plant you've reared in it."

"Sorra a worrd I've put in, yere rivrence. Ye can ax himself," Con replied stoutly, with, as he considered, absolute truth, for, indeed, he had been unusually sparing of embellishment in his report of the controversy.

"I shall certainly ask him why he called Ireland a water-logged bog that another bucket or two of water would sink in the sea," rejoined the Vicar, who had no doubt at all of the Celtic authorship of this simile.

"That's just what he said. 'It's more bother nor it's worth,' says he. 'Ye have it what ye made it,' says I. Thim were his very worrds, yere rivrence: 'It's more bother nor it's worth,'" Con repeated positively.

"I needn't ask him why he said that, because I know."

"Ah, thin, why now, yere rivrence?"

"Because it's true. It is more bother to them than it's worth, and they'd be glad to scuttle it to-morrow if they could by knocking a hole through the bottom of the bog of Allen."

"Ay, begor! The pirate's thrick: slaughther, sack, and shcuttle!"

"Well, we'll see what a hand you'll make of the country when you get it to yourselves, if you ever do. It will be a Kilkenny cat fight I'm thinking."

"An' what kind of a fight is a Kilkenny cat fight, yere rivrence?" asked Con, with infantile innocence.

"A fight between two cats tied together by the tails and flung heads down across a rope."

"Ay, just so. It's thim that flung 'em at each other made the fight, an' divil a wink of peace we're like to get till they're gone."

MORE ABOUT AN EASY CHANGE.

IN England, one pleasant condition of life is to reside in the country, with the means of going into town at will. The case is much the same in France, especially if you can combine with it some useful and profitable rural occupation. Farming is the first that presents itself; but should not be lightly undertaken.

The saying that—

He who by the plough would thrive,
Himself must either hold or drive,

is good in France quite as much as anywhere else. Small farms are the rule, large ones the exception. Often the land so cultivated lies in different patches at disadvantageous distances, a bit here and a bit there. This is one of the consequences of the compulsory division of inherited property. Often, too, the farm-houses, with their barns and stabling, are situated within the village or country town. Such a position, though inconvenient, was first adopted for security; but it is a decided drawback from the freedom and pleasantness of agricultural pursuits.

I do not say that every farmer acts as his own labourer or ploughman; but the majority have, in their youth, been brought up to handle the plough, and could do it still in cases of emergency. To draw a straight furrow ought not to be considered an ungentlemanly accomplishment, since the Emperor of China practises it.

Can you do it? Do you mind being out in the fields all day long, early and late, wet and dry? Have you faith in the virtue of the master's eye? If so, take a little land and farm it, otherwise do not.

This is spoken of the north of France. In the centre and south, crops are so different that no one without special knowledge and experience can meddle with them. The culture of maize, grapes, and olive, winemaking and oil making, growing orange flowers for perfumery, leech breeding, mulberry-trees and silkworms are delicate branches of agriculture respecting which ignorance is far from bliss. One must have served an apprenticeship to them to succeed.

But leisure in the country may be advantageously and pleasantly employed, if you can get a house with a large kitchen-garden and orchard attached to it. As "kitchen-garden" is written we will let it stand: but an old-fashioned garden of all work is a great favourite at French country houses, comprising flower-borders, backed perhaps by espalier or cordon apple-trees, which bear such handsome fruits, behind which are plots of all kinds of useful vegetables, interspersed with pyramidal pear-trees, strawberry beds, rows of peas and French beans, and here and there patches of savoury and aromatic herbs, the whole area inclosed and sheltered by horn-beam hedges and an outer belt of ancestral elms to break the force of too violent winds.

In not a few instances the eye will be attracted by yew-trees, clipped and carved into fanciful shapes, or trained into shady retreats and arbours. With such a garden, all may indulge in their respective preferences. Sight, smell, and taste will be simultaneously gratified, while the ear, during the nightingale season, will be charmed by the song of rival vocalists.

Amateur gardeners will find it as interesting and amusing—not to speak of the profit—to raise a varied succession of first-rate vegetables throughout the year, as to cultivate flowers. To make sure of having enough, you must lay out your plans so as to grow a little too much. The surplus which is not wanted for consumption in the house, or neighbours—and small presents make great friends—you need not hesitate to sell. It is the custom of the country. Everybody does it. Nothing should be allowed to go to waste. Well-to-do farmers' wives will strip their gardens of flowers, tie them into rude bunches, and take them to market, where they will be bought either by small town-folk, to adorn their confined and restricted homes, or by professional bouquet-makers, to fill up, by combination with choicer greenhouse blooms, the bouquets which they will furnish, at a handsome profit, for weddings, balls, and funerals.

With a small family, and a modest establishment, if you can get on with one maidservant and one manservant it will be better than with two of each or either. There is such a thing as jealousy in other matters besides love. Nor will you get twice as much work done by two pairs of hands as will be done by one pair.

It may be doubted whether it is advisable to bring English servants to reside in France, at least, if they have never left England before. They consider they confer a great favour by coming. Should they dislike their new surroundings, or turn up home-sick, you have the worry, expense, and responsibility of sending them safe back again.

They may not like the diet of the country. Fare with which French servants are content, will hardly suit the tastes of English servants, who will have little liking for "soupe maigre"—largely composed of sorrel—salad twice a day, with unsalted boiled beef as an extra treat, and fat bacon on ordinary meat-days.

As to what is good and fit to eat, servants are often more difficult to please than their masters. But I confess that we have our prejudices, too. My own servants, now and then, ask to be allowed, as a treat, to dine off a "rouassette," or spotted dog-fish, which is granted, provided it does not approach my table. Nevertheless, they assure me it is excellent—something like skate in flavour. The common black-backed ugly dog-fish, also sold and eaten, is less esteemed.

Besides, with English servants in the house, children will be much less ready to learn, and their elders to practise speaking French. Nevertheless, there are circumstances in which a good and really attached English servant is a great comfort in a family, especially to the mistress living abroad.

It may be mentioned that the words servant, master, mistress, are not in high favour, nor frequently used. A nursemaid is not a servant, but a "bonne d'enfant"; a housekeeper a "gouvernante"; a lady's-maid a "fille de chambre," or, more flattering title, a "fille de confiance"; and so on. The head of the family is "le patron," if in trade, if not, "monsieur"; the mistress, "la patronne," or "madame." A manservant is "le domestique" or "le garçon." In all these euphemistic forms of speech, the idea of servitude is excluded as far as possible.

It is true that by bringing servants who have lived with you in England, you know what you have to expect from them, unless they afterwards become discontented and unhappy at what they consider banishment. But to send to England for servants of whom you know nothing personally, however highly recommended—and they may really be excellent and worthy people in their way—is a

risky experiment as to their suitability for your requirements.

One day, a country neighbour said to me, "You know I have a new man from England as groom and gardener. I am perfectly satisfied with him in most respects, but I don't think he understands much about vines. My grapes seem to shrink and grow smaller and smaller every day. I wish you would come and look at them."

Certainly, I would. So, next morning, we three, the master, the man, and myself, met in the greenhouse. The cause of the mischief was seen at a glance.

"The vine is out of health," said William apologetically. "I can't do anything with it."

"What do you think would be the state of your own health?" I asked with a smile, "if the doctor were to come and cut out your stomach and your lungs?"

The man, staring as if he thought me mad, made no reply.

"Well," I continued, "that is just what you have done to this poor vine. You have stripped off every leaf, except one or two left for appearance sake."

"Yes, sir, that's quite true. I did it to throw all the nourishment and strength of the plant into the fruit, instead of letting it be wasted on the leaves."

"But you must first obtain strength and nourishment before you can throw it anywhere. The leaves digest the sap supplied by the roots; they also breathe the air which surrounds the vine. Take them away, and the plant has neither lungs nor stomach left."

"Ah! I never thought of that."

"Did you ever grow currant and gooseberry bushes?"

"I should suppose, sir, I have," he answered, half-offended.

"You must, then, have noticed that when their leaves are eaten off by grubs and caterpillars, the larvæ of the sawfly and the magpie-moth, the fruit never comes to anything."

"Yes, sir, I have noticed that, but did not know the reason. I thought the caterpillars poisoned the bushes, and that was all."

While driving in France, a new arrival from England ought to be perfectly wide awake, because the rule of the road for carriages and carts is exactly the reverse of the English rule. If you look about you, thinking of other things than what you are doing, you will be apt to pitch into somebody, who will then pitch a "procès-verbal" besides uncomplimentary

language, into you. On the road pass to the right of whatever vehicle you meet. Keep also to the right, to let others, travelling in the same direction, pass you.

On how much a year can people live comfortably in the country in France? This is a question which can only be answered by the people themselves deciding what they wish for, want, and must have for their money. It all depends on habit, style, station, vanity, good management, good sense, the art of cutting a garment according to your cloth, with a little self-denial when tempted to throw away cash on unnecessary extras.

A thoughtless and unscrupulous fast young man, one of the species called "viveurs," was reported to have spent, within a year, one hundred thousand francs, or four thousand pounds, not of course in his native country town, but in Paris.

"I don't believe it. It is not possible to spend a hundred thousand francs in a twelvemonth," said a respectable lady, whose ideas of expenditure were bounded by her provincial experiences.

"It is quite possible, madame," I said. "I could very easily do it myself."

"You, monsieur! No. Don't tell me that. You are only joking."

"Not at all, madame. The matter is serious, and so am I. I would take an elegant apartment in a fashionable quarter of the town. I would start an open and a close carriage and pair, a smart dog-cart, coachman, groom, tiger, and valet de chambre; a box at the Opera and the Théâtre Français, with frequent visits to less sober theatres. I would never breakfast or dine at home, but at the most expensive restaurants, where I would occasionally sup in pleasant company. I would go to races, balls, and public fêtes. There! Make your own calculation."

"But you say nothing about maintaining your family."

"In such cases, my dear madame, family is never thought of; it is out of the question—set aside—left to take care of itself. 'Viveurs' have no family."

"Good heavens! If such things occur in Paris, my son shall never go there."

"You cannot prevent it if, when he is a soldier, he is ordered there with his regiment. But, console yourself, he won't have a hundred thousand francs to spend; and at present we are all living decently in the country."

"Yes, that is some consolation. Oh, là, là! A hundred thousand francs wasted in a single year!"

UP THE SEINE.

IT is dead low water in the port of Havre de Grâce; the big steamers are all aground on the mud; early morning, too, half-past five, a.m. The rows of white hotels on the quay, with their green "persiennes" dimly visible through the haze, and the lighthouse on the pier-head, and the signal station behind it, are just indistinct blurs against the gloomy radiance that opens out seawards. The gangway that leads to the deck of the little steamer, in which we are about to embark for a voyage up the Seine, stands almost perpendicularly on end, and the steamer itself is grinding its keel uneasily on the mud at the bottom. The "marée," the tide, has been delayed a little this morning, explains one of the crew, when people complain, that the delay might have been spent more comfortably in bed. But the "marés" has far to travel, and cannot be expected to be punctual to the instant. Already we feel the "revif," the first throb of the mighty tide that is coming. The moorings are cast off, and a few inches' greater depth of water enables the boat to slip quietly away past the pier-head and over the bar, and out into the deep water.

Outside, the mist is rather thicker, and a drizzle from the skies mingles with the salt drift from the sea; but there is a suffused light through it all that promises better times to come. And, indeed, before long the mist rolls away up stream in white vaporous masses, and the sun shines forth and reveals the estuary of the Seine, where the wide stretches of yellow sand are fringed with streaks of foam. The city of Havre, white and brilliant, rising from the waves, with its forest of masts, and great shipbuilding sheds, set off by the smiling wooded heights behind; and directly in front of us the opening to the port of Honfleur, with the gabled roofs of its buildings standing out quite nobly from the low, brown cliffs. A number of fishing boats are putting forth from the harbour mouth, shaking out their brown sails, and winging away with as much clamour and flutter as a flight of sea-birds.

It is touch-and-go at Honfleur; a bell rings fiercely as we are getting alongside the quay, a group of passengers hurry on board, and then the steamer is away again and speeding up the estuary. Now the tide has turned in earnest, and is surging in with immense force and volume. The

sands are all covered with a whirl of tumultuous waters. Over yonder, on the Havre side of the estuary, that long, low headland is known as the Pointe du Hoc. It is Sandy Hook in a French disguise, and now the quarantine station, where the yellow flag floats at the masthead of some tall ship, and the flat green slope behind the point shows a shapely spire among the trees that belongs to the church of once famous Harfleur. The channel of the river has changed since Harfleur was the great port of the Seine, and now the place has shrivelled up into a mere village, within its ancient enceinte which would hold a dozen like it. But about that Pointe du Hoc gathered on the seventeenth of August, 1415, a mighty English fleet of sixteen hundred vessels.

And on the point that magnificent host disembarked, their King, Henry the Fifth, leading the way, and without any molestation taking up his quarters at the Abbey of Grasville, the towers of which are visible on an eminence to the left of Harfleur, while his great nobles encamped where they could, just out of reach of cannon shot from the walls of girded Harfleur.

But the steamer at full speed, with a strong tide behind it and a pleasant westerly breeze, soon leaves all these scenes behind it. The river now presents the appearance of a vast lake, with white chalk cliffs on one side, and on the other wide marshy plains, and with no visible outlet in front of us. But as we approach a bold and wooded promontory, with steep, scarped sides, the channel of the river comes into view, taking a sharp turn about the headland. And, perched on the topmost height, we see the towers of the famous castle of Tancarville, one of the great barriers of the river, past which no vessel might sail without having first reckoned with the castellan. Another bold promontory behind us rising from a kind of no man's land, neither land nor water, where great "digues" shut out the tide, but which is often under water, marks the embouchure of the river Risle, whose pleasant valley leads to Pont Audemer, Montfort, and the country of the ancient Norman iron-works.

But Tancarville is left behind, and we enter another lake-like enlargement of the river, the hills receding far away to the left, where ancient Lillebonne lies in the hollow—Lillebonne, with its Roman amphitheatre and ruined castle, where once our William of Normandy held council

about the invasion of England. And higher still up the valley stands Bolbec, with its cotton factories, and print works. But these are far away and only to be seen by the eye of faith, while close at hand on our right we have a jolly, cheerful, little town perched upon the river bank—a semi-maritime place in appearance, with its signal station and lighthouse, and its broad quay bordered with white houses, and a grey, old church close by. This is Quillebœuf; and the name seems foreign enough, but it is not so foreign as it seems or sounds. There is a little English port on the Humber, called Selby, and by some such name did the Danish rovers call their little settlement by the banks of the Seine, which has been twisted and rolled by tongues speaking Norman-French into Quillebœuf.

At Quillebœuf we receive a boat load of passengers; a couple of stout pilots, each with his canvas bag, on their way home to a station higher up the river; a rosy-cheeked curé, followed by a tall and sallow young seminarist, who helps up the side an old lady, evidently his mother; and a pretty, arch-looking girl, who, perhaps, is a cousin; last of all, having an especial eye to the safety of the young lady, comes a young cavalry soldier, smart and good-looking. The boat is cast off, away we go full speed, and friends, waving adieux and benedictions from the quay, are already out of sight.

Quillebœuf, it may be said, is the chief port and outlet for a whole district, the Roumois, a country which, although ignored by geographers and the official world, has still an existence in the notions of the peasantry, and its inhabitants differ slightly both in physique and patois from the people on the other side of the river. For over there on the top of those distant cliffs, which bound the river basin, is the land of Caux—a chalky plateau, which forms the principal part of what was once known as High Normandy; but we are running on the Quillebœuf side of the river, where low-wooded hills rise from the very margin of the stream, while on the other side stretches a wide, green plain, intersected by ditches and “dignes,” with rows of poplars and willows fringing the watercourses.

Further on, the river takes a sudden bend to the left, the turning point being marked by a little village with a quaint, old Romanesque church on the height—it will not do to call the church Norman here, where everything is Norman—but it

bears the impress of days before the Conquest in a conical turret and little round apse. And just here, where the woods come down to the verge of the river, we are reminded that we are on the skirts of the great forest of Brotonne, which occupies the whole peninsula formed by the great bend of the river. If we landed here and struck a bee-line through the forest we should reach the river again at Le Landin, some four-and-twenty miles higher up its course; but these four-and-twenty miles contain some of the pleasantest scenery on the river. And then we would probably lose our way across the forest, to say nothing of possible wolves in the path, and for a certainty those wild boars of Brotonne, whose tusks have done such mischief in story and legend.

Indeed, there is something a little uncanny about this forest, which lies darkly piled up like a thunder-cloud against the horizon. In fable and tradition which go back to a period dated long before our legends of King Arthur, the forest was known as Arelaune, though questionably a forest then, but, again, by dim tradition a flourishing and well-peopled country, with towns and villages scattered over its surface. Some countenance to the tradition is given by the fact, that remains of Gallo-Roman buildings have been discovered here and there, with the traces of many wells and reservoirs of water.

About one of these ancient wells, by the way, there long existed a curious tradition. A torrent, it was said, began to run from it which threatened to inundate the whole country. The well was choked with bales of cotton and the calamity averted. Anyhow, the spring had ceased to flow for centuries; but the memory of it was kept alive by tradition, and about fifty years ago, in a time of great drought, the inhabitants of the Roumois, thinking that the risk of a flood was better than the certainty of thirst, set to work to open up the old well, not without some trepidation lest they should let loose the long-imprisoned torrent in overwhelming force. Well, after digging for about fifteen feet, they came upon a number of piles bound together by thick planks of beechwood, the interstices packed with clay and moss. At this point the work was stopped by a great downfall of rain, which lasted many days, replenishing the springs and water-courses, and putting an end to any necessity for further excavation.

It was the rosy-cheeked curé, with whom

some of our party had made acquaintance, who told us this little story.

"The well-sinkers should have gone on digging," it was remarked, "perhaps, they would have found some vast treasure."

And, then, some one repeated the story of the well that is supposed to exist near the Roman remains at Wroxeter, as recorded in the ancient doggrell :

Near the brook of Bell
There is a well
Which is richer than any man can tell.

The curé, whose eyes now sparkled with excitement, here remarked that the same idea had occurred to him, and that there was, in times gone by, a general impression that vast treasures were hidden in this old forest. And then, as if feeling that he had spoken incautiously, the priest retreated to his breviary, and was not to be drawn out further on the subject. But one of the pilots, who had been an interested listener, broke in with a story of his own about hidden treasure.

It was in the days of the great Revolution, when King Louis, poor man! was laying plans for escape. Naturally, the bonhomme did not care to land penniless and without baggage on a foreign shore, and so a plan was arranged to save as much as possible of the treasures of the Crown. A vessel then lying at one of the quays of Paris was purchased for the King; its name was the *Télémacque*, and it was well known on the River Seine, where it used to ply between Havre, Rouen, and Paris. On board this vessel was placed a great amount of treasure: there were vessels and salvers of gold and silver; treasures of art, as well as of material; and with these the private hoard of the King, bequeathed to him by his ancestors in view of some such trouble as had actually befallen him, all in gold bullion, and amounting to many millions, and this was to be taken down the Seine and across the Channel, and lodged in the Bank of England, where it would be ready for the King when he wanted it. And when this precious cargo had been stowed away, it was covered over with joists and planks as if for some new building. In the night the vessel dropped down the river unnoticed; an old pilot was in command—one who had conducted the King when he had visited these parts in happier times—a man faithful and devoted, as were many then in the old Duchy of Normandy.

She dropped down the river, passing

everywhere unsuspected, till forty-eight hours after she left Paris the vessel passed down the channel of Quillebœuf. All the danger of capture seemed now to be over, and the patron left the deck for a moment to drink the King's health in a glass of brandy. In that moment the stupid fellow at the helm ran the craft upon a sand-bank. At any other time there could have been little harm done, for the flood tide was due, and would have floated the ship without damage. But, as it happened, this was one of the highest tides of the year, and just there the tide begins to mount in what we call the "mascaret"—a great wave that sweeps everything before it. The wave caught the ship, capsized it, and swept it away as if it had been a straw. One man swam ashore, but the rest of the crew and the patron were drowned. As for the ship, she was soon swallowed up in the sand, and there were reasons, you will understand, why the owners of the cargo never came to inquire for it. At last, about thirty years ago, some people who had got wind of the matter, came to Quillebœuf with divers and apparatus; and, indeed, they found the carcass of the ship and the wood she was loaded with, but the gold and silver bullion still lies buried in the sands.

"And that is a commodity, Monsieur le Pilote, which does not readily find its way to the surface."

The speaker was an elderly gentleman with heavy moustache and imperial, but of an air somewhat faded and fatigued, who had been enjoying a prolonged repose in the salon below; but who now, in the warm air and sunshine, seemed to feel an awaking of the faculties.

"Very true, Monsieur le Comte," said the pilot coldly. "But here, messieurs," turning to the rest of his audience, "I find myself at home. Behold my wife on board the little boat that approaches, and there is little Jeanne, who waves her handkerchief from the quay."

In truth it is a mistake to discuss exciting topics on such a voyage. The past few miles of country had swept by us unheeded, and here we were at Villequier, where there is a pilot station, and a little cabaret, where the pilots sit all day long, waiting their turn and playing picquet. They are of the old rock, these pilots, and play the picquet of the time of Louis Quatorze and of Molière. But here a turn of the stream opens before us a most pleasant, smiling river scene. On one side

the banks are clothed with luxuriant woods, with scarped precipices shining white among the foliage. A low spit of land stretches out into the stream, beyond which the river, folding and doubling into the hazy distance, shows among meadows and tall poplars with distant hills beyond, here blue and bright, and there charged with the dark fringe of the forest; and the river, brimming full, calm and smooth as a mirror, reflects the whole bright scene on its surface.

"And there is the Château of Villequier," said Monsieur le Comte, who was evidently a relic of the Second Empire, pointing to a large pavilion-shaped house on the hill above, of the period of the eighteenth century, surrounded by terraces and slopes, and beautifully-wooded glades. "It has its associations, no doubt, of earlier generations; but to me it suggests only the memory of one—the most amiable and best of her sex—who adorned the court of our Emperor in the days of its greatest magnificence. In origin, Monsieur, I believe this charming woman was of your country—an English governess, endowed only with her charms and her attainments, who captivated the heart of the ruler of a neighbouring State. She made his happiness, and, in turn, he poured upon her all the wealth at his command. Whose costumes were more magnificent? whose jewels more brilliant? whose invention more frequent? whose conversation more full of wit? Perhaps she was not regularly beautiful; but oh! you should have seen her at her best to understand what I feel. At the fall of the Empire this gifted creature retired to the charming abode you now behold. Here she sought for rest and peace, and occupied herself with works of beneficence and charity, in which she was assisted by the worthy husband of her more mature years. But, alas! the spirit of flame soon destroyed the delicate vessel that contained it. A few years passed, and we find this gifted creature, deprived both of mind and sight, breathing her last between the prison-like walls of a *Maison de Santé*. Adieu, Villequier," cried the Count, waving a pocket-handkerchief faintly scented with patchouli. "Shade of a brighter world, farewell!"

But as well as its *Hôtel des Pilotes*, and its comely château, Villequier has pleasant chalets aligned upon the river's brink, and one of these was a favourite resort of Victor Hugo in old times. And it was in cruising about the river here that his

daughter, recently a bride, was drowned; her skiff capsized by a sudden puff of wind from the hills.

The Seine has here become quite an inland river, and, placid and smooth, seems as little capable of mischief as a sleeping child, but it is not a river to be trifled with, and with fierce tides, strong currents, and sudden squalls, should be dealt with cautiously and respectfully.

Away goes our ship with a full head of steam, waking the echoes of the white cliffs and wooded summits with snortings and whistlings. Here we overtake quite a fleet of vessels, the chief of which—a tall, elegant barque from Toronto—is making up stream under conduct of a powerful tug. The ship has been battered and storm-tossed in its passage across the Atlantic, for broken rails and battered sides speak of decks lately swept by fierce seas. But now all is peace and calm; her white sails are bent to catch the pleasant westerly breeze, white sails shining against the woodland green; and, instead of sea-mews and stormy petrels, swallows circle about her rigging, and instead of the roar of the waves there is the hum of insects and the gentle chime of far-off bells.

Already the rich, irregular outline of Caudebec church spire is in sight, the hills open out and a town is seen with solid grey houses and tall roofs of slate filling up the wooded valley. A broad, white quay along which a few small coasting vessels are moored, shows a signal-station and a tall mast hung with white balls, to which, every now and then, the "*maître du port*" adds another as the tide rises higher. There are benches along the quay, shaded by an avenue of elms, and the old people sit there in state, and watch the traffic of the river. The steam ferry has just crossed the river with a hay cart on board, and its six white horses, and a crowd of peasant women in white caps, and their blue-bloused companions. A huge, cumbersome boat, in shape something like a flour scoop, has just put out to us; as we approach the boatman drops his oars, and rushes to the prow of the boat to hurl a rope at the heads of the crew of our steamer, and in a moment the boat is alongside and hurrying with us up stream.

Ah, why this haste? Let us linger here for awhile. Let us talk of Caudebec with its fragments of old ivy-covered walls and cool, shaded wells, where the washerwomen bleach their linen among the foundations of ancient towers; with the quaint, narrow

streets where the houses lean one against the other; with ancient courtyards where a sombre stillness reigns perpetually. Here old Talbot—Shakespeare's old Talbot—once ruled the roast, and English men-at-arms patrolled the ancient walls, soldiers who had landed with their King at Harfleur, had fought at Agincourt, and had followed their old chief to his pleasant retirement, soon to be summoned once more to alarms and skirmishes, and the soldiers' death which was almost as good as a victory to war-worn veterans. Here, too, came Warwick as guest of the King of France, when the great King-maker was contriving the downfall of the White Rose which he had himself raised from the dust. And what commotions of civil and religious wars have swayed about the old place now so calm and still!

Caudebec was then a stronghold of the Huguenots, and noted for hat-making and tanning; and when came the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes the best part of its population emigrated to England, and the commercial importance of the town departed. But it was still the chief town of the Baillage, the resort of the King's officers and the neighbouring seigneurs, and many tall stately old houses still exist as a souvenir of that stately period.

But while we have been gossiping about Caudebec, the place itself is out of sight; we have taken in a goodly contingent of passengers and left others behind. Also, to our great contentment, the cook has come on board; he has donned his uniform of white, and his great cap, and, in a little cuisine, no bigger than a sentry-box, he is engaged upon operations that diffuse a charming odour all around. Oh, yes; breakfast upon the deck, under the awning, for the sun is now powerful. A dish of "éperlans," fried a delicate brown, an omelette, and a "côtelette aux pommes," with a bottle of white wine, will restore exhausted nature, and give us a fresh interest in what is passing.

The "éperlans" bring us to Lamailleye, a little town end on to the river—a port, too, in a small way, with a Welsh brig alongside loading with potatoes. As for the great Château de Lamailleye, once famous in history, it has vanished root and branch, with nothing left to tell that it once existed, except the graceful balustrade of the river terrace. We may fancy La Vallière leaning over and sadly regarding the soft, sweet landscape; or Hortense de Mancini, the niece of Mazarin, proud and

petulant, whose fate it was, afterwards, to hold a gaming saloon in Chelsea.

We are still expecting that "côtelette aux pommes," when we come in sight of Jumièges, on a low, fertile strip of land. Two gaunt, octagonal, western towers, and the broken shell of a central one, are all we can see over the trees; but here was one of the richest and most famous of Norman abbeys, which gave Canterbury an Archbishop, and offered an asylum to the chronicler who told the story of the Conquest of England.

By Jumièges the river narrows to a deep and rapid stream, hemmed in on the opposite side by huge buttresses of chalk downs, covered with wood. Indeed, this is the extreme edge of the great forest of Brotonne, which we first came in contact with when the morning was quite young. It is the turning-point of another great lap in the river's course, which makes a gradual face-about to the north. The scenery is still of the same character. The hills advance and recede, now steeply rising from the river's brink on one hand, while on the other are prairies, and orchards, and a rich plain studded with poplars. Then hill and plain change sides, and everything begins afresh. At the top of the present bend lies Duclair, another little river-side port, with more quays, more white houses, more hotels, and even cafés. An English boat is here, taking in a cargo of fruit, and a black collier steamer ballasting with blocks of white chalk which are quarried from the cliffs beyond. It was just here, by the way, that the Prussians sunk three English ships, in the war time, to make a barrier across the river. Further on, the chalk cliffs assume all kinds of strange fantastic forms, with caverns, and chaams, and projecting rocks. One is pointed out as the chair of Gargantua, while other groups assume the form of a grand feudal castle.

Above Duclair the river becomes more narrow and tranquil, and at the same time assumes a gayer and more mondain aspect. There are charming pavilions and châteaux by the river side, with yachts, and steam-launches, and sailing skiffs, all festooned with flags. And passing round another great bend of the river, we come in sight of the first of those green islands which give the Seine such a gay and smiling aspect in this upper part of its course. The river no longer follows the contours of the hills, but seems to hew a way right through them. And there is but a narrow rim of

prairie land between the opposing masses that hem in the gorge. At the narrowest part of the bend lies a pleasant little town called La Bouille, packed into a narrow gap between the chalk escarpments.

About this little town there was war in grim earnest in the latter days of 1870. The Prussians then occupied Rouen with Manteuffel's army corps, and they had possession of all the right bank of the river almost to Havre. But the French army of the North-west threw a brigade or two into La Bouille, driving out the German outposts and threatening to cut off the river communications with Rouen. Had the advance been adequately supported, it might have proved troublesome, for there was a strong position on the crest of the hill, looking down upon the little village of Mouleneaux, and crowned by some huge earthworks, dating probably from prehistoric times; but bearing the sinister name of the Château de Robert le Diable. The Germans, attacking the post by the highway along the south side of the river, failed to drive out the French, and there was great gratulation among the franc-tireurs and mobiles who formed the greater part of the force at what really seemed to be a victory.

But a few days after, or rather on the night of the third of January, 1871, the Germans, marching in force from Rouen along the highway to Jumièges, crossed the river by an extemporised pontoon bridge, and marching over the neck of the peninsula at earliest dawn, flanked the French positions and completely surprised the defenders. The weather was bitterly cold, the river full of floating ice, and the French on their freezing heights were sufficiently occupied in keeping life in their bodies, and never dreamt of such an attack. Many prisoners were taken who were marched into Rouen, the German bands playing gaily airs taken from the opera of Robert le Diable, which, as the luckless captives were obliged to own, were appropriate enough under the circumstances.

But in itself, La Bouille is a jolly little place, and the hotel, with its verandahs perched right over the river, is a very good place to dine or stop at. But the steam-boat endures no delay, and carries us off up the river, which is now giving evidence in increased movement and traffic of the approach to a considerable city. And soon the villas of the wealthy Rouennais begin to stud the banks on either side, and summer-houses and ravillons appear

among the foliage of the green islands. Hills clothed with forest still hem in the valley; but it widens gradually and spreads out till among masts and steamers' funnels and trees, and islands and bridges, we see the tall iron flèche of the cathedral towering over the roofs of Rouen.

In all, the voyage has taken eight hours, and eight hours better filled with interest and enjoyment it would be difficult to find. For the Seine from its very mouth is bright and charming. There are no dull levels of marshes, there is no low country to be passed through; every turn gives fresh pleasure, that is, if the weather be bright, and the temper equable; and the whole passage costs only six or seven shillings. Of course the boats are dependent on the tide; they only run in summer, and generally start from Havre at an early hour; but, allowing for these drawbacks, there are few excursions which will so well repay a traveller in a hurry, as a trip up the Seine.

PRESCRIPTIONS EXTRAORDINARY.

WE hear, every now and then, of new diseases — diseases of which our grandfathers were ignorant, caused by the "storm and stress" of these later days of steam and competition; but the principal ills to which flesh is heir have been with us since the unhappy day when Pandora's feminine curiosity burst all bounds. And so, in all times, physicians have been in great request, and diseased and troubled man has sought for means to alleviate his pain. In the first century of the Christian era lived in Rome Caius Plinius Secundus. He was a good man and true, a scientist so far as his light went, and with a professional distrust for the prescriptions of those whom he calls magicians, who strove to cure by spells, amulets, and charms. And he set himself to make a collection of prescriptions for the benefit of the suffering Romans of his day, being careful only to insert those which had been duly recommended by the faculty. This curious and interesting book was translated into English by Dr. Philemon Holland, three years before the death of Elizabeth, at which time there were great numbers of people who implicitly believed in the remedies there set down. We venture, then, no apology in offering our readers a few of Pliny's choicest prescriptions, so

old that now they are new, serving them up in Dr. Philemon Holland's own words.

Cæsar's hardy warriors must have known little of the excruciating twinges, the red-hot pinches of gout; but the Romans of Pliny's day were a different race. Prosperity had sapped their manhood, indulgence their health, and they were no strangers to the "rich man's disease." Pliny confesses that, "The time hath bin when it was no common disease, as now it is." He gives the subject the attention it demands, and says, speaking of gouty folk: "It were very good for the easement of their griefe, eftsoons to lay thereto frogs, fresh and new taken; mary, the best way, by the direction of Physitians, is to split them through, and so apply them warm." It was left to a later age to discover that frogs are cold-blooded. Elsewhere he recommends a broth made of the sea-scorpion, "sadden with dill, parsley, coriander, and leeks, putting thereto oile and salt," and then, curiously enough, adds, "also the brothe or decoction of a tortoise," in other words, turtle soup! The following are a few more pleasant and easy ways of putting your gouty foot or hand at ease:

"A Cerot made of Beare's grease, Bul's tallow, and wax, of each an equall quantity. Viper's grease, or the ashes of a viper burnt in a new earthen pot. A liniment made with the ashes of the wild wood-mice mixed with honey. Sheep's suet and the ashes of a dog's head." And, "Some there are of this opinion, that the gout of the feet will be assuaged, in case a man cut off the foot of a quick hare and carrie it about him continually."

The animals here mentioned are comparatively easy of access, but what are we to say of the hyena? And yet Pliny tells us, "there is not a wild beast of the field that the magitians have so much in admiration as it, for they hold that in the Hyæne itself there is a certaine magicall vertue, attributing a wonderful power thereto, in transporting the mind of man or woman, and ravishing their senses so as that it will allure them unto her very strangely." And much as he scorned these "magitians," he himself advises the gout-ridden to take "the ashes of the Hyæne's ridge-bone, the tongue and right foot of a seale, put thereto a Bul's gall, seeth them all together and make a cataplasme thereof, spreading the same upon a piece of a Hyæne's skin, and apply it accordingly, and you shall see how it will ease the pain

of the gout." And, lest there should be any difficulty in obtaining all these simples, another remedy, simpler, but equally potent, is given: "The haire of yung boy children which is first clipped off, is held to be a singular remedy for to assuage the painful fits of the gout; if the same be tied fast about the foot that is grieved; and generally their haire, so long as they be under fourteen yerres of age, easeth the said anguish, if it be applied unto the place."

The "falling sickness," or epilepsy, that disease formerly known as possession by devils, is readily cured, according to Pliny, by any of the following simple prescriptions: The juice of wild rue, the seed of "penirolall," the wild poppy beaten in a mortar and mixed with white wine, a spoonful of fennel seeds; but these must be taken at certain periods of the moon, and "there is a deepe and settled opinion among men, if a man or woman do ordinarily take garlick with meat and drink they shall be cured of the disease." A garland of violets, a drink composed of thyme, the juice of rue, squill vinegar, and decoctions and preparations of many other herbs and vegetables are mentioned. These are simple enough and readily attainable; but other prescriptions are given of a more complicated nature. For instance: "The braines of an asse first dried in the smoke of certain leaves"—here Pliny forgets his usual perspicacity and omits to say what leaves—"drunk to the weight of half-an-ounce every day in honied water, is good against the falling evil. Some give counsell to eat the heart of a black he asse, together with bread; but in any wise it must be done abroad in the open aire, and when the moon is but one or two days old at the most."

Black asses are somewhat scarce, though the patient might not object to the expense; but other remedies would be difficult to obtain nowadays. For instance Mr. Jamrach's prices would mount by leaps and bounds if the following prescription was much "run upon." "The gall of a lion mixed with water," but the patient must "so soon as he hath taken it, run awhile for to digest the same." If the modern appetite should turn against such medicine, there are several others, all warranted efficacious.

"The taile of a dragon bound within a buck or doe skin to some part of the body with the sinews of a stag or hind." A stellion or lizard, "roasted upon a wooden

broch or spit," or "the bloud of a weazill," dried and pulverized with snail-shells.

Another excellent remedy was to tie "unto the left arme the little stones that he had taken out of the craw or gisier of young swallows; for it is said that so soon as the old swallow hath hatched her birds, she giveth them such little stones to swallow downe; but, in case this dose be taken in the very beginning, and that the first time that one is false of this disease, there be given him for to eate the young swallow that the 'dam hatched first,' he shall be delivered from it clearly, and never more have fits." A very desirable effect; but how are you to tell the first-born swallow, swallows' nests being rather inaccessible and with but a small opening? But Pliny cannot be expected to explain everything, and perhaps the patient might prefer the following: "The heart of a vulture stamp together with its own bloud, and given in drink three weeks together, worketh wonders in this disease. So doth the heart of the young bird of a vulture, if the patient wear it about his arme, or hang it at his necke; but then they give counsell to eat the flesh of the vulture itselfe, and especially when he hath eaten his ful of 'man's flesh!'" Fortunately "a serpent's old skin which she hath cast off," worn upon the body, is equally efficacious.

Do you suffer from ague? Then you must catch a viper, cut off his head, or take out his heart alive, and carry it about with you wrapped up in a "linnen" cloth. Or you can cut off the end of a mouse's nose and the very tips of his ears, being careful not to kill the mouse, and carry them about with you wrapped in a red cloth.

Some authorities recommend the "right eie of a green lizard, plucked out while he is alive; which done, within a while after they chop off the head; they then infold them both in a piece of goat's skin, and give the patient in charge to have the same about him. Some there be who lap a caterpillar in a little piece of linnen cloth, and bind the same thrice about with linnen thred, making three knots thereof, saying at the knitting of every knot, that this they do to cure him or her of a quartane fever."

Cobwebs, spiders, urchin's flesh, goose grease, all are mentioned as invaluable remedies.

If these sound too simple, or the ague still remains, here are remedies more recondite. "They say that the dust or

sande wherein any hawke or bird of prey hath basked or bathed herselfe, is singularly good for the quartane ague, if the patient wear it in a linnen cloth, tied with a red thred. Item, the longest toothe in the head of a cole-black dog, is very proper for this purpose. There is a kind of bastard waspes, which the Greeks call thereupon *Pseudospheces*, and ordinarilie they do fly alone, and not in troupes as others doe; which, if they be caught with the left hand, and hanged about the necke under the chin, do cure quartane, as some Magitians say." . . . "Others carry about them a naked snail in a little piece of fine leather, or else four heads of snails cut off, and inclosed within a small reed. They prescribe likewise to swallow downe the heart of a Seagull or Cormorant, taken forth of the body without any knife or instrument of yron, to keepe the same dried, to beat it to powder, and then drink it in hot water."

Fever receives the attention it deserves, being cured most by amulets and remedies to be worn round the neck; as, for instance, you are to take "the right eie of a wolfe, salt it, and so tie it about the necke, or hang it fast to any part of the person." Elephants' blood was invaluable, but if the squeamish should turn against the remedy, a poetic substitute is provided—"a lion heart steeped in oil of roses!"

Deafness was readily curable by a compound of "goosegrease, fresh butter, and bul's gall, tempered with myrrh and rue, or the fume that a horse doth froth, mixed with oil of roses."

A very rational remedy is recommended for toothache. "If one bite off a peece of some tree that hath been blasted with lightning, provided always"—and here is the rub—"that he holds his hands behind him in so doing, the said peece of wood will take away the toothache!"

Headache was at once cured by having the forehead touched by "the trunk or snuffle of an elephaunt"; or, "if a man poure viniger upon the hooks and hindges of doors, and make a liniment with the durt that commeth of the rust thereof, and therewith anoint the forehead" his headache is at once cured.

Sore eyes were a simple matter, and required only "to anoint them with wolf's grease or swine's marrow"; but actual blindness required, of course, more elaborate treatment. "The gravie or dripping of a Hyæne's liver, newly taken out of the body and roasted, being incorporated with

clarified hony into an unguent, riddeth a man from blindness." Or if the eyes squinted, "if the eies be dipped three times in that water wherein a man or woman hath washed their feet, they shall be troubled neither with blearednease nor any other infirmity."

The remedy for "relaxed throat" was simple enough, but the doctor needed to be of herculean strength. "If the uvula be false, it will be up again if the patient suffer another to bite the haire in the crowne of his head, and so to pull him plamb from the ground."

Should an accident occur in eating Pliny is equal to the emergency. "If a peece of bread have gone wrong, or lie in the way readie to stop the breth, take the crums of the same loafe and put them into both the eares, you shall see it shall soone be gone, and doe no further harm."

Of a similar nature is the following: "If any fish-bone stick in the throat and will not remove, it shall incontinently goe downe if the party thus ready to be choked withall put his feet into cold water; but if some peece of any other bones be ready to choke one, make no more adoe, but take some little spils of the said bone, and lay them upon the head, and you shall see it pass away and doe no harm."

There are periodical epidemics of hydrophobia, or rather fear of that horrible malady, and it is as well to know how to treat the bite of a dog whether mad or sane. This is what Pliny recommends: "Make a decoction of a badger, a cuckoo, and a swallow, and drink it off." Cramp was to be cured by "a cataplasme of a live wolf, sodden in oile till the said oile be gelled to the height of a consistence of a cerot." Pliny seems to take it for granted that the "live wolf" would raise no objections to be thus utilised. The nervous and shy will be filled with courage if they "take the pith or marrow out of the Hyæne's backbone, along and incorporate with oile and hony; it is passing good for the nerves."

It is as well to give serpents a wide berth; but, if you unfortunately are bitten, all you have to do is lay upon the bite "the braines of a hen," and you need fear no ill consequences. In India is a common belief to this day that snake bites are rendered innocuous by splitting a fowl in half and laying it, while still warm and bleeding upon the wound. The fowl is thought to absorb the poison. Bees are supposed to die after stinging; and Pliny

tells us similarly of serpents, that, "serpents can hurt but once, neither kill they many together, to say nothing how, when they have stung or bitten a man, they die for very griefe and sorrow that they have done such a mischief, as if they had some prick or remorse of conscience afterwards."

Pliny has recipes for everybody and everything; even the ladies are not forgotten. For the complexion: "The pasterne bones of a young white bulkin, or steere, sodden for the space of forty daies and nights together, until such time as they be dissolved into the liquor; if the face be wet with a fine linnen cloth dipped in the said decoction, it causeth the skin to look clean and white, and without any rivels or wrinkles; but the said linniment must be kept all night to the face in the manner of a maske." For the hair: "Ants' eggs stamped and incorporat with flies, likewise pounded together, will give a lovely black colour to the hairs of the eie-browe." To curl the hair: "A cammel's taile dried and reduced into ashes and incorporat with oile doth curl and frizzle the hair of the head."

It seems incredible to us that remedies such as these could gravely be recommended and believed in, and yet such was the case. It must have required a marvellous amount of faith to get some of these gruesome prescriptions down, and faith, as we know, works wonders in the healing art. After this glimpse at the pharmacopœia of the long past we cannot but feel thankful for the knowledge and skill possessed by nineteenth-century doctors.

OSTRICH FARMING.

IN 1870 our imports of ostrich feathers summed up 32,045lbs., of the value of £102,026. In 1886, the last year of which statistics are published, the figures were 290,359lbs., valued at £551,309, an average price, therefore, of nearly thirty-eight shillings per pound. Considering that good average wing feathers, or quills, as they are technically termed, will weigh only ten to the ounce, we have now a pretty little sum to work out in order to get at the number of feathers brought every year into this country. After all, the figures arrived at will be but an approximation; it would be more correct to multiply by three, as the best feathers average

in the total less than a third of the whole produce.

Looking at these figures, the question which first arises is: "What in the world becomes of them all?" Easy to ask, but very difficult to answer satisfactorily. Speaking for the sterner sex, we can only say that we do nothing with them. To us ostrich feathers are neither meat, drink, washing, nor clothing. The only thing, then, is to apply to the gentler sex for information. We do so, and are at once told that everybody knows that ostrich feathers are an absolute necessity at all Courts, as we might have found out for ourselves from the "Morning Post," or the "Queen," whenever there is a Drawing Room; that they are very extensively used for trimming bonnets, in ornamenting fans and innumerable other articles of feminine apparel and adornment. We are evidently on the track; but on suggesting that supposing one-tenth of the annual import goes to court millinery, surely 29,000lbs weight, equal to, say, 4,640,000 feathers, would more than supply all the Court demand for several years. To this the reply is that men do not understand these things; whereupon we conclude to give it up as too high for us, and leave it for others who are better qualified to speak on the matter.

Where they come from is another and much easier question. From Algeria, and North Africa generally, Egypt and Syria; but, practically, our own possessions in South Africa supply the world. In fact, by far the greatest part of our imports are shipped from Cape Town, and we may, therefore, look upon Cape Colony as the typical feather-producing country.

It is only twenty years ago, that is, in 1867, that the Cape export was 17,145lbs, every feather of which was the produce of the wild bird. It is hardly necessary to say that the present enormous supply is no longer afforded by this source. The ostrich is, especially in a state of nature, the most timid of all bipeds; as population advances the ostrich retires back towards and into the desert. There can be little doubt that, as it was yearly getting scarcer and scarcer, and the labour involved in its capture had grown so extreme that it was doubtful as a question of profit if the game were worth the candle, before many years the ostrich would have shared practically, if not actually, the fate of the American buffalo. Fortunately, however, for the demands of society this result has been obviated. Most people

have heard of ostrich farming, and know that this is an industry peculiar to the Cape; but few of the general public have any idea of the important nature of the trade, and most will learn with surprise that some ten millions capital are employed in ministering to the wants of fashion, and it is to be supposed that this sum produces a profit in spite of all that croakers may say about increased production and fall in prices. It may, therefore, not be uninteresting to give some account of the actual working of the business. There is no need to begin at the beginning, and trace the domestication of the ostrich from the very earliest times; suffice it to say that the tame bird is found pictured on early Egyptian monuments, and that its capacity for domestication has been known through all historical times, but no serious attempts to utilise it as a regular business; no ostrich farms, in fact, were made till 1867, when it occurred to one or more Cape farmers to see if something could not be done in that direction.

To whom belongs the honour of leading the way it is impossible to say, and needless to inquire. The simplest reply to such a question is to say that the germ was in the air and settled on a few individuals in whom it found congenial matter, and from thence it spread over the whole colony.

Everybody has heard of poultry farms in England, and it is generally understood that the business has never succeeded. But that they can and do succeed in South Africa, the figures with which this paper begins, are proof sufficient. Nor is the word poultry wrongly applied. Everyone who has had experience of our own domestic fowls, is qualified, by a few weeks' observation, to look after a flock of ostriches which are really neither more nor less than enormously magnified barn-door fowls. Once get this firmly implanted in your mind, and it is only a question of a few weeks, and there you are. Here a child goes into the yard with a few handfuls of grain, calls out "Chuck, chuck," and straightway every feathered biped within ear-shot makes for the sound, as if his life depended on it. It is just the same with the ostrich. We all know the "chuck, chuck" of the hen when she has laid an egg; the ostrich does just the same, only more so. We know when a hen gets broody; well, anybody with half an eye can see the ostrich getting in the same state. Hens will lay away, and we know what to do then; the ostrich will do just the same, and her egg is

treated in the same way. When a hen is sitting she is penned off and kept quiet, and we do the same with the ostrich. When our chickens are out we take them away and keep them warm; the same with ostrich chicks. After that we give them to their mothers, and she looks after them. Here the parallel ceases, for whether due to their African origin, or for reasons unknown to us, both parents decline parental responsibilities, and leave their offspring to look after themselves. In a state of nature, therefore, a great many die, so then it is that knowledge steps in, takes the young ones and feeds them till they are able to get their own living.

There are other resemblances. A child has only to shake her pinafore, and off go all the fowls, ducks, geese, and turkeys. So with the ostrich, wave but your hand, and it's off like a shot. Not that they cannot be savage, especially at breeding time; but let us distinguish. Most families have a story, how little Mary, when she was five years old, was attacked by a turkey cock, and frightened out of her small wits. But, now, when little Mary is grown up, she can laugh at her baby terror, for she knows that if she had only had the sense to wave her handkerchief, the turkey would have kept off her. But she did not know that then. Well, it is much the same with the bigger fowl. If you go into a paddock very likely a cock may make for you, and if you have your hands in your pockets, or are star-gazing, or wool-gathering, you will very soon be aroused. But nobody thinks of going into such a place without being prepared for emergencies. The preparation is very simple—a good stout thorn-bush. A lick or two with this and your assailant has had enough. It is generally said that the chief difficulty with poultry farms here is that after a certain length of time the land gets sick, as it is termed, disease becomes rife, and nothing avails but to change the ground. This, however, is practically impossible in a densely populated, highly-organised country like ours. But at the Cape, where land is not the high-priced commodity it is here, it is possible to allow for the increased size of the bird, and give it the quantity of land necessary for its maintenance and well-being. And yet even there there are not wanting indications that artificial breeding and rearing bring consequences not unlike those which affect our own fowls. Of late years diseases, till then unknown, have wrought

great havoc amongst ostrich flocks, and it seems not improbable that overcrowding (which is after all a relative term) is at the bottom of the matter. To be sure, it sounds absurd to talk of overcrowding birds, even though they be ostriches, when the average allowance is thirty acres to a pair. But, after all, this is only about the same proportion as is found necessary for our own domestic fowls, always remembering that, except in seasons of drought, the ostriches keep themselves. And this latter fact is a most important consideration. None of us could get a reputation for the quality of his poultry if his fowls had to get their own living; but it is one thing to breed for meat, and another to breed for feathers. Nobody civilised ever thinks of eating ostrich, except to say that he has eaten it, and one experience is enough. Bushmen and Hottentots will eat and relish it; but then they will eat anything.

There is no difficulty in starting an ostrich farm, no more than in keeping fowls here. You buy a pair of breeders, or a couple of pairs, or a hundred pairs if you like, as they are regular articles of trade. But the probability is that you are not a great capitalist, and your ideas will be confined to a modest pair. They begin to breed at four years, and go on indefinitely, improving with age. These will cost, or would cost a few years ago, fifty pounds apiece.

If, however, you have land but no capital to lay out, you can go "halves"—that is, a capitalist finds the birds, you keep and tend them, and the receipts are divided equally. But, first of all, you must know if your land is suitable. Not all South Africa is fit for the ostrich. What is necessary is a hot, dry climate, and level, sandy ground; and this is not the characteristic of the whole of Cape Colony. It is found best in the interior, some two hundred miles from the coast, as the Karoo country, which is hot, dry, and barren.

The wild bird is still to be found in Damavar Land, Namaqua Land, and the Kalihari Desert; but outside these districts the bird thrives under domestication, which has this advantage, that they have not to wander over a large area in search of food, and when this is the case they become very tame.

But to return to our beginner. He has, of course, got his paddock ready for his pair. If he wants the minimum of risk he takes care that his fences are in perfect order; this is of the first importance, it

stops wandering and fighting with other cocks. Wire is the very best; although it is expensive in the first cost it lasts a long time, and stakes, hedges, and ditches are really more expensive in the long run, as they entail such a lot of repairs and looking after. The wire should not be much, if at all, less than five feet high, for it then catches the ostrich above the bend of the neck, and stops it getting over.

A great point is to get guaranteed breeders, who have already had a nest or nests together, and may therefore be trusted to have others in the future. As to the various dodges, sharp practices, and smarttricks of the trade, we need only say that they are as rife in connection with ostriches as with horses. It is not difficult to breed and rear and understand either, but when you go into the market to buy and sell you must keep your weather eye open.

And now you have to get your birds home, possibly a long distance. There is nothing to be done but to drive them, and this is easy enough. You go in front with a bag of mealies which you keep dropping out, and the birds follow picking as they go, and, in this way, on level ground, they can do their twenty and thirty miles a day comfortably. Better still to have, in addition, a couple of men behind with thorn bushes to help them on and keep them in the track.

All this is very easy, but it is very risky work travelling. The ostrich is so easily frightened that the least noise or strange sight will send it off at a mad gallop, and then nobody knows what accident may happen to it. None but the most experienced and steadiest hands should ever be allowed to march with birds. When one cuts off in a fright a new chum will, as likely as not, sail away after on his horse, and the harder he spurts the faster goes the bird. An old hand, on the contrary, takes it easy, just keeps it in sight, and ten to one it sobers down in a very short time, for, if left alone, they never go far off.

But the birds have got home; now to business. The pairs are, say, five years old, and have had experience of nesting. Left to themselves, the male scratches up the earth with his legs, throws it behind him, and, working round roughly in a circle, makes a heap say a foot high, and three to four broad. On this the hen lays an egg every alternate day, for about twenty days, then she stops for from four to ten days, and then starts again on the

same plan, making the total to thirty or forty eggs, all closely packed. On these the pair sit alternately, the male, however, doing all the night work, and the first business of the new-comer is to turn every egg one by one so that that part which was next to the earth now receives the full warmth of the sitting bird. The sitting lasts forty-five to fifty days, and, when the chick is ready to come out, the parent breaks the shell, tears the membrane, and liberates the prisoner, which at first is limp and weak, but soon picks up with the heat and begins to totter about on its long legs. In about twenty-four hours they begin to peck, and must then be looked after, as ostriches have no sense of parental duty, and will not only not look after their offspring, but will gobble up all their food if they get a chance.

This is Nature, which persists in going on in the same way as she did when first invented—to save discussion, let us say a very long time ago. Nowadays, we amend her and improve upon her in many ways. This is most plainly shown in the process of artificial incubation.

The causes which led to this practice are obvious. The ostrich egg is very delicate, and will not keep its vitality for more than thirty days. Now, as the laying lasts a couple of months, it is evident that half of it becomes worthless for sitting and can serve no purpose except as curiosities in bazaars. It is, therefore, the business of man to provide against this improvident character of Nature and utilise what is wasted by that force. No occasion to go into detail about incubators, the principle is well known. Practically they are padded boxes, each holding fifteen to twenty eggs, and heated by hot water, which can have its temperature readily under control. The eggs are taken away as laid, one always being left in the nest. Each one is numbered and dated, and a list made out with its weight and description of the parents. They are kept in a dry room till the necessary number is obtained, when they are placed in the box and the heat is applied. The temperature is 40° Centigrade at first, 39° at the end of eighteen days, and then 36·5° to the finish. During the whole process, each egg must be turned upside down every day at a regular time. This is absolutely necessary.

About the fifteenth day the eggs are examined to see which are impregnated and which not. This is done with a box

containing a lamp and a reflector, in front of which is an opening which fits an egg supported on the outside by a little shelf. If the egg is clear it will not hatch; if opaque, except at the larger end, where the air-chamber is, it goes back to the incubator. Sometimes the egg is rotten, in which case the gas formed within forces the liquid through the shell and turns it yellow. After forty days, the greatest attention must be paid day and night to listen for the noise of the chick. On the forty-third day a small hole should be made in the shell near the air chamber, which has already been marked with a pencil. Next day this hole is enlarged, so as better to notice any movement inside. When this is seen the shell must be broken, the membrane torn away, and the chick freed, taking care to use the greatest delicacy in every movement. The chick is wrapped up and kept warm for twenty-four hours, when it has a very small lot of finely-chopped greenstuff with a few bread crumbs. On the third day it gets a little milk; on the sixth a little grain with the vegetables and a little water to drink. After two months they get just what the old birds have, that is, mangel-wurzel, cabbage, maize, barley, lucerne, carrots, kais, water-melons, prickly-pears, in fact, any kind of greenstuff.

It is important to remember that crushed bones are an absolute necessity, as through them the bird gets the lime which is necessary for the formation of the shell. No doubt also that they serve in the crop for digestive purposes, and it is to this craving or natural instinct that we must attribute its passion for swallowing anything it comes across, of which everybody has read numerous instances. It is really and truly a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, such as insects, frogs, snakes, and scorpions; and it was never known to resist the attraction of anything shining, such as bits of copper, steel, brass, or glass. From this senseless habit no end of accidents arise. The substance sticks in the throat, and when this happens, if it cannot be pushed up or down, the only thing is a surgical operation. An incision is made, the offending matter removed, the slit sewed up, and kept from the air, when the wound soon heals. It sounds very wonderful and scientific, but it is nothing when you are used to it. Of course, fatal results not unfrequently follow, for the ostrich is, as we say, very short of pluck, and rather likes moping than otherwise.

A full-grown male will weigh about three hundred pounds, and a female two hundred and fifty. They are said to live to a very great age—some say one hundred years. We do not know if anybody has bought one to try, but as time gets on some trustworthy statistics are sure to be forthcoming.

The plucking comes about every nine months, but varies according to locality, and the views of the farmer. Some who look more to quality than to quantity, pluck only once a year, as the feathers approach more nearly those of the wild bird, which is the standard of excellence. It is customary to begin at one year old, but they are better left till the second year. The produce should be one pound weight, made up of fifty quills, and seventy-five to one hundred tail-feathers, classed into tail, wing, breast, and back feathers, for the males, and plain tails, plain wings, spotted tails, spotted wings, breast and back feathers, for the female. They are sorted in this way, washed in soap and water, then in weaker soap and water, passed through starch, dried, packed in boxes, sent to Cape Town, and shipped to London, where they are sold by auction, and thus find their way wherever women most do congregate.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER XVI. DI AND HER MASTER.

"THAT was why I telegraphed to you," said Dr. Graves. "He recovered his speech, as I say, in the course of a few hours, and to a certain extent the use of his left side, though you see he is still very helpless. Before he could speak he managed to scribble on a piece of paper, 'Don't send for Mr. Romaine'; but I found in spite of this that he was very uneasy in his mind, calculating how soon you would be at home. And then he said to me yesterday morning, 'I don't want to spoil his pleasure, but I wish he was here. There's my will. I want him to be here when I make my will, and I don't think I ought to put it off. What do you say, Dr. Graves?' Well, no one could think of deceiving a man like him. I told him that the sooner he made his will the better, for I could not deny that

he was in a precarious state; so I took it on myself to send you that telegram, and I hope you think I did right."

"You were quite right, Dr. Graves."

"And," said the Doctor, "if he asks you to write to his lawyer this afternoon, I advise you to make no objection."

"It is a very strange thing, isn't it?" said Paul. "A strong man like him, no great age, and leading such a simple life, to break down in this sort of way."

"Sometimes these things are unaccountable," said Dr. Graves; and, then, as the cold wind came whistling over the common, he hastily buttoned up his coat, got into his carriage and drove away.

Before Paul turned back to the house, he lingered a minute or two at the gate, looking up the road, across to where dark masses of trees, some changeless firs, the others all bare and brown, separated him from Red Towers. There he supposed that the works, the preparations for Celia, were going on actively. He had half forgotten them; but it had occurred to Celia's active mind, just before he started from the Paris hotel, that his going back now might be something more useful than a sacrifice to friendship, after all; he might see that the workmen were not making mistakes, and that Colonel Ward's illness did not bring things to a standstill. She chattered away, reminding Paul of a good many things, while he was hurrying through his dinner. Her manner was very charming, and she talked of Red Towers as if it were home. Paul promised faithfully to bring her back a full report of everything. But now, within a few yards of his transformed old house, standing at Colonel Ward's gate, in the cold twilight of that December day, with such a damp chill in the air, and a slight powdering of snow on road, Paul felt that all the painting and polishing and ornamenting of Red Towers was somehow quite incongruous; it pleased him less than ever; his mood on that sad winter day was far more in accordance with the dark, shabby old cottage behind him, where preparations were going on for something so very different from the life that lay before him. Perhaps this dismal state of mind was not unnatural. Paul was never very high-spirited; melancholy, to characters of his kind, comes more easily than its opposite; lately, in Paris, Celia had given him such wild excitement of happiness as he had never known before; now came the reaction, a certain consequence with a nature like his, and now

it seemed a little difficult to believe in happiness at all.

As Paul stood leaning on the gate, sad enough, something came and pushed a cold nose against his legs. It was Di, who had hardly left her master's room since he was taken ill. Paul stooped and patted her.

"Yes, old doggie," he said, "I remember how you came and made love to her in the stable-yard that day. Well, no wonder! everybody and everything loves her; how can they help it, I should like to know! and England is a coldish country without her, you'll allow that, Di; and yet she would tell me that I am very unreasonable not to be happy. That's because she can't quite understand how every look and every word of hers matters so tremendously. What is it like, life without her? Don't you know, Di? Then I'll tell you. It's like crawling along a frozen lane between high banks, with one's eyes on the ground. That's it. There's no outlook, nothing. One's faculties are frozen, you see. One can't even care whether the drawing-room is the right shade of blue; that is, whether she is to be happy or miserable. One is, in fact, like a toad in a stone. Come along, let us go back to the Colonel."

Di's eloquent hazel eyes gazed earnestly at Paul while he talked to her in this fashion. She was doubtful; she did not altogether understand him till he came to his last proposition, and to this she agreed most cordially. She trotted back before him, in at the door—which he had left half open when he went out with the Doctor—and up the low, uncarpeted staircase, and along the uneven boards of the passage to her master's door. Barty opened it before she had time to scratch. She went to the bed and stood up on her hind legs for a good look at the sick man, who lay and looked at her without speaking. Then, with a little faint cry, too low to disturb him, she went off to the fire and laid herself down. Barty went lightly out of the room, and Paul came in and shut the door.

The arrangements of Colonel Ward's room were like himself, and, like an old soldier, simple and severe. His little iron bed had no curtains, and there was no carpet on the floor. Since he began to be ill, Barty, his chief nurse, had hung warm curtains at the window, brought an arm-chair upstairs, and imported a tall old screen from Red Towers; but the Colonel presently complained that this darkened the room, so it was pushed away into the corner.

On the whole the room was cheerful, with a fine fire, which Barty had just made up, crackling in the grate. And Colonel Ward was by no means a dismal invalid. As Paul came in and sat down, stretching out his long legs to the fire, he watched him with a sort of sharp satisfaction. But presently his expression changed a little.

"Well, Paul, old boy, what have you been doing?" he said. "Burning the candle at both ends again, as you did when you were reading for honours? What's the meaning of it now? You are not in trouble, are you?"

Paul looked rather wonderingly at the grey face on the pillow. The Colonel's wits were plainly as quick as ever, though his voice was low and failed now and then.

"No trouble except your illness. That's one, certainly," he said, and he smiled.

"My illness hasn't had time to pull you down like that," said the Colonel. "It must be that hateful Paris, which takes the colour and the goodness out of everybody."

"I didn't know," said Paul.

"Has it had any effect on Miss Darrell?"

"None — except that she gets more perfect every day."

"More perfect—a first-class man—he is demoralised, he has forgotten his English," said the Colonel. "Did she send me any message?"

"Oh yes, her love; and so did Mrs. Percival a great many messages, and you are to make haste and get well, Colonel."

"Ah! what did Graves say about that?"

"He said—well, that you would have to be very careful."

Paul stared at the fire; and Colonel Ward did not speak again for a few minutes. Presently he said, in a stronger voice than before, "Graves thinks I am going to die."

"He didn't tell me so," said Paul.

"Look here, Colonel; you have no business to say such a thing, or to take it into your head. Why, you are getting better."

"Getting better! well, perhaps so," muttered the Colonel. "Three days ago I couldn't speak. But it's coming again, you know. I asked Graves, and he couldn't deny it."

"That is all nonsense," said Paul.

"Doctors know nothing. Look at Di; she agrees with me;" and Di, as she lay before the fire, lifted her head and gave that sad little human cry of hers again.

"Does she? I don't think that sounds very cheerful," said her master. "Be

reasonable, my lad, and let us face facts. Why should I live to be a so much older man than your father, whose life was so much more valuable than mine? Don't think I am fretting over what can't be helped. Life has not had any very deep interest for me since your father died. One wants a friend of one's own age."

"No deep interest? Why, Colonel, what sort of interest have you taken in me, and my concerns?"

"That's a different thing; that's one-sided," said the Colonel, a smile flickering over his worn face. "I am not complaining, mind you. I don't complain, either way. Your friend the Vicar came to see me yesterday—he's an odd chap, that—and asked me among other things if I was afraid of death. I said, 'Well, a soldier who has tried to do his duty is not afraid of his superiors.' He didn't seem quite satisfied, but Graves came in just then, so he said no more. Your father and I always agreed that we should choose death in battle. Neither of us was to have his choice, it seemed; but I don't see why death in a room like this should be met in a different way. It is the same thing, after all; only you have more time to think about it. And it's no kindness for one's friends to disagree with the doctor. I don't suppose Graves is a specially clever man; but he knows his trade well enough for me, and when I ask him a question, he tells me the truth."

"I cannot see why he should take a dark view, or you either," said Paul. "You are getting better, and you may live for years."

"Well, I may," said Colonel Ward. "Who knows? I may. I should like at any rate to live till after you are married, and not to give you too much trouble in the meanwhile. Now we have talked enough for the present. By-and-by we must have a few words on business."

He closed his eyes, and seemed to sleep. For nearly an hour Paul sat and dreamed over the red gleaming fire; the warm stillness of the room was not so oppressive to him as it would have been to most young men; for he was hardly conscious of it. Part of the time he was himself almost asleep, not having closed his eyes the night before. The world outside grew darker; it was just twenty-four hours since he had walked with M. de Montmirail to meet Celia at the door of Sainte Monique. Only twenty-four hours; they seemed like days to Paul, accustomed as

he was now to be with Celia every day, and all day long. Di pricked her ears now and then at some sound below; she never slept, but kept her faithful watch lying there. Generally her clear eyes were fixed on her master's bed; but sometimes she lay looking very earnestly at Paul, as if his dark, pale face and tired eyes had some fascination for her. When his eyelids drooped, and his head fell back against the chair, she sat suddenly bolt upright, staring at him; this change of position had the instant effect of rousing him, and then Di was satisfied, and lay down again. It was evident that in her opinion a watcher in the Colonel's room must not be allowed to close his eyes; at the same time, she took quiet means of keeping him awake. Unless the Colonel was talking, no bark, or even moan, was to be heard from Di.

Presently Barty came softly upstairs, and called the Squire out of the room. His agent, Mr. Bailey, was down at Red Towers that day, and wished to see him, having just heard of his arrival. Paul went down, leaving Barty in charge, and found Mr. Bailey in the drawing-room.

The agent was a lively young London man, without any of the old-world air which seemed to belong to most of the connections and dependents of Red Towers, as well as to the place itself. His office, however, was hereditary, and his father had been a very different and more reverential sort of person. He was much smarter than Paul, whom he considered one of the queerest fish he had ever known. But though he talked of Paul in his absence in an amazingly patronising strain, he knew quite well how to behave to him in his presence; and Paul rather liked him, though they never found much to say to each other. He was honest, intelligent, and very energetic, and had done a great deal for the estate in the last few years. The present alterations interested him deeply, and he was an enthusiastic admirer of the future Mrs. Romaine, whose artistic taste seemed to him to equal her beauty and her "fascinating manners."

He had a great deal to say that evening about the house, and the way in which the works were going on. On the whole, he thought things were satisfactory. He spoke of Colonel Ward's illness with civil concern, and did not tell Paul that the foreman of the works had thought himself more hindered than helped by the Colonel's constant and active supervision. He did,

however, hint that the Colonel had fussed himself into his illness, having been terribly put out about some wrong paper which had come from London, and with which a room had been half-papered before the mistake was found out. Mr. Bailey said that he had never seen the Colonel so painfully excited about anything. He confessed that the news of the stroke, a few days after, had not surprised him very much.

Paul listened sadly; he had heard nothing of this before, for the Colonel had put the matter right without troubling him about it; and now it seemed as if this worry might indeed have brought on his illness. He did not say much to Mr. Bailey, but when the agent suggested, "Was it too dark for him to come and look at the house now?" he answered rather quickly, "Yes." The whole subject of the house and its decorations seemed painful and incongruous now.

"I shall be down again the day after to-morrow," said Mr. Bailey. "Will that suit you to look over things? Shall you be here still?"

"Yes, I shall be here. Very well—unless the Colonel is worse," Paul said absently. And the young agent went away, thinking, perhaps, how oddly the goods of this world are distributed.

He did not, of course, philosophise, but he said to himself: "Now, there's a fellow who has got everything, and cares for nothing;" and he went on to think what he would do with Paul Romaine's possessions if they were his.

When he was gone, finding that the Colonel was still asleep, this young man who cared for nothing wrote to Celia, telling her all that was in his heart.

He did go to Red Towers that evening, after all. It was easy to fall back into the old habit of doing what the old servants arranged for him; and when Sabin came across to say that his room was ready, and that he could dine comfortably in the study, which the workmen had not touched, Paul soon saw that Barty and Mrs. Perks had enough to do at the Cottage, without making preparations for him. The idea was so reasonable, that he readily acted upon it. He went up again to see the Colonel, who was lying very still; their talk in the afternoon, when he had been so bright and full of life, seemed to have exhausted him. As Paul stood by his side for a minute, the Colonel opened his eyes and murmured something. Paul had to stoop down to hear what it was.

"Di must belong to Celia," he said. "Do you hear? Don't forget."

"I will tell her you said so," Paul answered, with a sudden burning sensation about his eyes, and a tightening at his throat.

His letter to Celia had already gone to the post; the message must wait for another day; but he hardly knew whether his dear old friend's words gave him more pleasure or pain. That the Colonel should have such faith in Celia, faith enough to trust her with Di, was, indeed, beyond what he had ever hoped; but he knew now that the Colonel would not get better.

There was no business talk that night; so he told Barty to fetch him if he were wanted, and walked off, tired and sad enough, towards Red Towers. Sabin tried to cheer him with hopeful remarks while he dined in the old study, but he was not in a mood for talking to Sabin. He was thinking all the time of that evening, not so many weeks ago, when the Colonel had dined with him there, and afterwards, in the garden, he had told him of his engagement. How angry he had been, dear old fellow! But then how easily, when she came, Celia had smoothed his prejudices away.

The old house was always very silent at night, but that night its stillness was something quite oppressive, and Paul, thinking of Celia's love of human life and stir, of the unflagging enthusiasm with which she had lately been enjoying Paris, of the absence in her nature—which he thought he knew so well—of any desire for peace and quietness, began to wonder how she would endure living here. Then he reminded himself, as he sat staring into the study fire, with his happy little terrier at his feet, that Celia would have the power to make Red Towers as cheerful as she pleased; the whole county would be delighted to welcome her; she would soon have plenty of acquaintances, many of whom, at present, he only knew by name, being known to them as a clever, shy, eccentric boy, whose two guardians had effectually protected him from the designs or the influence of neighbours. When his beautiful wife came to live there, with her pretty manners, her good taste, her possessions in the way of horses, dogs, flowers, everything she cared for, or that Paul's money could give her, certainly Red Towers would be very different then. No place could be dull where Celia was, and, after all, she was not one of those women who

depend on amusement, and are bored in the midst of it. Her temper was far too sweet and cheerful; she would always be charming to everybody, and happy everywhere. When once all this tiresome bustle of preparations was over, and the ordeal of the wedding, then real happiness would begin, and go on shining to the end.

"As for me, I'm morbid and unreasonable. Mrs. Percival told me so," thought Paul. "Why on earth can't I shake off this stupid sort of nervousness? The Colonel doesn't want me, because he's ill, to go about as if the place was full of ghosts. One might really have a reason for being miserable. After all, there is only one person in the world who matters, and she might like somebody else better than me. And she doesn't, and I am the happiest fellow in the whole world."

He threw himself back in his chair, and looked round at his old dark walls and his bookcases. Colonel Ward's hand had been everywhere; he had arranged the books, had hung up Paul's pictures and other treasures over the mantelpiece; he had been here, as proud and contented as Sir Paul himself would have been, to welcome the young fellow when he came home with his splendid degree.

"I am glad they have let the old den alone," Paul thought. "I shall keep it always like this, if Celia doesn't mind."

Then he thought he would go and look at the other rooms; so he took a candle and marched about their sounding emptiness, where there was not much to be seen. The solitary light shone faintly on new artistic colourings; there was a fresh, damp, heartless smell of paint and plaster, and the air was very cold, though fires had been burning all day. Paul unbarred the shutters of one of the great windows, threw it open, and looked out into the night. The garden and the woods were still, and would have been in deep darkness, but for the glimmer of a powdering of snow.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XVIII. FRED'S TRIUMPH.

AS Gower hurried into the house to see Fred, no sacrifice seemed to him too great to make for May's favour; while this sacrifice he was about to make was by no means so great as it appeared.

His father's fury would be frightful if he (Augustus) took upon himself Fred's guilt; but it would be hardly less frightful if he did not take it, and yet insisted upon marrying the forger's sister. Marry May he must—this was a postulate he would not go behind—and his marriage with her being assumed, he had only to weigh against each other his father's fury at his supposed forgery, and his fury at his union with the sister of the felon. Allowing that the wrath he would have to reckon with in the latter case might be the less of the two, still it would most certainly not be so much less as to induce him to forego the credit he would get with May for his magnanimity in taking her brother's guilt upon himself. In fact, the credit was the chief consideration of all, since without it he could hardly hope to win May's hand. And this credit, on which all depended, could be gained at the cost of a few degrees of additional parental fury.

With these considerations clearly and cogently arranged in his mind, Gower made his way upstairs to Fred's room.

Fred, having somewhat recovered from his stupefaction, owing to the hopes he had of the success of May's intervention, started up in bed as Gower entered and looked eagerly in his face.

"I have seen your sister."

"Yes?"

"Well, I'll do it for her; there's nothing I wouldn't do for her."

"But what can you do?" asked Fred, though he knew well what alone could be done to save him.

"I must write to the governor to say it was I who altered the cheque and got you to cash it."

"What a good fellow! Gower, I shall never forget this; never!"

"He'll disinherit me, of course; but it can't be helped."

"Oh, it will blow over," Fred answered almost jauntily.

"What! forgery!" cried Gower, by no means pleased to have his magnanimity minimised. "You would have found that it wouldn't have blown over you, I can tell you; and he'll be ten times more furious with me."

"I didn't mean that it wasn't splendid of you; I never heard of anything so splendid. But I can't bear to think that you should lose so much by it; and if it were not for May, I wouldn't hear of it, I wouldn't indeed; but I declare I thought I had killed her when I told her of it. She fell back fainting, and frightened me out of thinking of myself at all. There never was such a sister!"

"Look here, Beresford; I wish you'd tell her that it's for her I'm doing this. You won't mind, will you?"

"Of course I'll tell her, though she needs no telling. No one in the world would do it for a mere friend."

"I would give anything or do anything, if I could only get her to care for me," Gower cried ardently.

"You could do nothing that she'll think more of than this, for she'd just lay down her life for me."

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"You'll say all you can for me to her?"

"I don't think there's the least need for me to say a single word for you to her; but how could I help speaking to her of all I thought of this and of you? I have no one else to speak to about it."

"And if you thought I had the least chance I'd speak to-day to her; I cannot bear the suspense."

Which, according to Fred's interpretation, meant, "I shall write that letter when I am sure of being paid for it—not before."

No doubt, this was in Gower's thoughts; but, besides this, he had in his mind the advisability of striking while the iron was hot.

"All right; only let me see her and sound her, and sing your praises to her first."

When Gower departed under the pretext of composing the fateful letter to his father, but really to allow Fred and May to get again together, Fred turned this suit of his friend to his sister over and over in his mind.

First of all, he promised himself no small advantage, not immediately merely, but prospectively and permanently, from May's engagement to the heir of such an estate as Sir George's—such shooting, hunting, fishing, and good living! Of Gower's disinheritance he felt there was not the least danger. Next he turned to think of May's mind in the matter. Was there the least doubt of her accepting such a match? He could not admit such a doubt. Personally, perhaps, Gower was not the sort of man that a girl like May, or any girl, would fall headlong in love with; but this, after all, was beside the question to Fred's thinking. For, to begin with, he considered marriage to be to a girl what a profession was to a man; and as a man, in spite of some distaste for it, will enter the ministry because his father has a fat living in his gift, or will go to the bar because his father is a solicitor, so a girl marries for position or fortune a man whom she would never marry for love. As, then, Gower in fortune and position was a most brilliant match, May would marry him in spite of his being a muff. Thus Fred argued generally and primarily with much common sense, and not without the warrant of the world. But, again, Gower would now to May's romantic imagination appear no mere commonplace muff, but a hero of chivalry.

Here Fred returned again in thought to the bearings of this match on his own

interests. Sir George, he thought, would certainly relent before his death, yet hardly less certainly would he die before long, for he took no care of a shattered constitution. His place was just the jolliest in the world to stay at, and, as Gower's brother-in-law, he might stay there indefinitely. Then Gower—or May, any way—would supply him with plenty of money when, upon Sir George's death, they came into command of it. Last and not least—for Fred never looked a long way ahead, and hated besides the idea of work—Gower might give or get him a post to his taste, an agency, or something of that sort. Besides this, such a marriage would secure Fred absolutely against every possible consequence of his forgery.

Under the influence of such reflections and calculations, Fred's spirits rose surprisingly. What an ass he was to have thought but a few minutes since of throwing up the sponge! Why, he had even meditated suicide—dropping off the wheel of fortune altogether—and now a single swift turn of it brought him from the bottom to the top! For he was already in imagination at the top.

He sprang out of bed buoyantly, dressed himself quickly, and hurried down to breakfast. Here his mother was awaiting him to make much of him in her timid dog-like way—fearful each moment of a repulse. However, Fred was unusually complaisant. Not once throughout the entire meal—though she was unremitting in her loving attentions to him—was he rude to her, a kindness which the poor woman felt inexpressibly.

After breakfast, Fred sought out May and found her in her room.

"May, you've saved me!" he cried, almost before he had entered the room.

"But he said it would be no use to write," May answered, speaking of what her heart was full.

"No use to write! But he's writing now."

It was what she had feared far more than hoped. For the first time she felt that Fred was reckless and selfish.

"Oh, Fred!"

"It's easy to say, 'Oh, Fred!' and look as if I had committed murder," Fred answered in an injured tone. "But what was I to do? You know very well it would just have killed mother and father."

"But there's his father to think of."

"That's a different thing. Besides, he doesn't think of anyone but you. I

declare I never saw a man so much in love."

"I'm so sorry," May cried, saying the commonplace words in a tone of extreme distress.

"Do you mean you dislike him?"

"I like him, of course; but not in that way."

"Oh, well, he can't expect you to be knocked over in a moment like himself; but you'll come to care for him; you couldn't help yourself, he's such a good fellow."

May shook her head.

"May, do you mean there's no hope at all for him?" he asked, in a startled tone.

"I never could come to care for him in that way, Fred; never."

He sank into a chair with a despairing gesture, half-affected and half-sincere.

"That settles it!"

"What do you mean?" she faltered.

"What do I mean! You can't really think that I could let him do this for me now!"

"But he isn't doing it for—for that," she pleaded feebly.

"He's doing it only for you, and if there's no hope at all for him, it would be worse than mean in me to let him do it," he cried magnanimously.

There was a moment or two's silence before poor May ventured to make this timid suggestion. "Fred, don't you think that if Mr. Gower explained everything to his father—how you were driven to do it, I mean—and if he offered for you to return the money, don't you think that Sir George Gower would pass it over?"

"What nonsense, May! He's just an old savage, and all the explanations in the world wouldn't stop him going on with it."

"But if he said something about father—what a death-blow it——"

"Of course you know Sir George better than I do, or than his own son! If there were any other way out of it, do you think Gower would offer to ruin himself for me, or that I should accept the offer?"

"It's such a terrible sacrifice to accept!"

"Good Heavens, May! You drive me mad! Do you think I don't know what a sacrifice it is to accept? Do you think I would accept it, if I had only myself to consider? I would have been out of it all by this if I considered only myself," he added, with a dark significance that chilled her to the very heart.

After a few miserable moments of silence, May cried helplessly: "But what can I do? I cannot help not caring for him."

"You might give him some hope. Of course he doesn't dream of more than that as yet."

"He's been speaking about it to you?"

"He's been raving about you, if you mean that. He can talk of nothing else."

"But how can I be anything to him? He knows me only for a few days; it's a mere passing fancy. Fred dear, do try to put it out of his head," she cried, speaking in breathless and staccato sentences.

"I can put writing that letter out of his head, and I must; but the other is impossible, as you know as well as I do."

"But what can I do?" she cried again, in a tone of desperation.

"I see now that there's nothing for you to do but to break this to father. You can do that," Fred said sullenly.

"Fred, you know I would do anything—anything—to save you, and spare father this; but it isn't in my power to care for him as he wishes, is it, dear?" she cried appealingly.

"That will come—it can't help coming, he's such a good fellow. But now he asks you only not to refuse him."

"But it never will come, never. It isn't right; it isn't fair to him."

"He's the best judge of that himself, I suppose."

"Did he make this the condition of his writing?" May asked ungenerously, driven as she was to bay. She could not, somehow, believe in Gower's magnanimity.

"Did he what?" asked Fred, in a tone of indignant amazement.

"I thought, perhaps, he might have asked you to speak to me," she stammered, very much ashamed of herself.

"He told me that he was doing this for your sake, if you call that making a bargain," he retorted scornfully.

"I oughtn't to have said that; but I didn't mean—I hardly know what I meant."

"It isn't he that makes a condition of this, but I. I couldn't accept such a sacrifice, even for your sake, or mother's, or father's, from a man who was nothing to me. If he were going to be a connection of course it would be different," he said loftily.

But the mere word "connection" was unfortunate, as it helped May to a shuddering realisation of the lifelong relationship pressed upon her.

"I cannot do it, Fred; I cannot indeed," she cried, looking up at her brother with wide, wistful, deprecating eyes.

He stared, as though in stupefaction, at her for a moment, then turned abruptly, and strode from the room. For a minute or two after his departure May stayed in the spot, in the attitude in which he had left her, thinking upon this thing demanded of her. Then her thoughts, taking another and more terrible turn, hurried her headlong from the room, and along the passage to Fred's door.

Here she knocked tremulously twice in quick succession, and, receiving no answer, essayed to turn the handle and enter. But the door was locked on the inside.

"Fred!" she cried frenziedly; "Fred! Fred!" Still there was no answer. "Fred! open! listen! I will do anything you wish. Fred!"

"What?" he cried fiercely at last.

"Let me in. I must speak to you!"

After a few moments, in which she heard him moving across the room and then returning, he strode to the door, turned the key, and flung it open.

"Well?" he asked, with angry impatience.

May's eyes, after a glance at his face, looked across the room to where she had heard him moving a moment before, and there saw lying upon a chest of drawers what she had feared—a revolver. In fact, Fred had just crossed the room to take it from his half-unpacked portmanteau, and to place it conspicuously upon the top of the chest of drawers.

"Oh, Fred!" she sobbed with a piteous kind of dry sob, as she sank into the nearest chair.

She looked so horror-stricken that even Fred felt remorseful. However, he could not afford to lose the advantage which the success of his brutal ruse had given him.

"It's all right; you needn't look as if I had made a ghost of myself," he said.

But she could only stare helplessly up at him, with the dazed look of one half-awakened from a frightful nightmare.

"There; it's all right," he repeated reassuringly, placing his hand gently on her shoulder.

Then she broke down into a wild, semi-hysterical passion of tears, and it was some minutes before she could sob out:

"Fred—promise—promise me never to think of—that again—promise me."

"There, May; I'll promise anything you like. It's all right, I tell you. Come, calm yourself," he said soothingly, stooping as he spoke to kiss her forehead.

Then she put both her arms round his

neck and clung to him, and gasped out between her sobs: "I will do what you want, if he wishes me."

"Dear old May!" he cried in intense relief. "You've saved me and all of us. When I thought of mother and father I was nearly mad."

"And you will promise?"

"There's no need to promise now. Of course, I'll promise," he cried buoyantly.

And then, poor May, reassured, though not a little surprised by this flippant reaction of high spirits, hurried back to her own room to fling herself there upon her knees.

Meanwhile Fred was triumphant, with little or no remorse to chequer his triumph. Had he not bought that revolver in London, when in one of his black moods, against such a moment as this? True, he had no immediate intention of resorting to it, but he might have been driven to resort to it, if Gower broke his promise on learning that May was immovable. After all, what May had imagined might have happened an hour or two later. As for her being victimised, the idea was preposterous. Never again would she have the chance of so brilliant a match; while, as for coming to care for him, of course she would in time, after the manner of women, and once she cared for him she would see no fault in him. On the whole, Fred felt that he was making a handsome and happy provision for May's future.

A CHAT ABOUT CLOTHES.

THERE must be but few people in our northern islands who would welcome sympathetically an "apology for clothes," even were I to write such an essay. To us, dress is nothing less than a second skin. We should die were we deprived of our natural skin. We certainly should not live through many winters were we abruptly compelled to transact the business of life without the clothes which may be called our artificial skin.

To be sure, apologies for clothes have been written ere this. Their authors have penned them in all sincerity, sitting, as Sydney Smith would say, in little else except their bones. Clothes, to them, have seemed sinful vanities and pomps of the flesh, as much deserving of condemnation as luxurious living, and the more positive infractions of the divine commandments. But these consistent anchorites

and ascetics have no right to expect others to fancy their maxims, or to follow their example, unless they can prove that it is comfortable as well as befitting to face the weather unprotected. They, for the most part, lived in delicious climes, where the sun itself was warmer than ten woollen cloaks; and thus, while assuming to preach, they did but advise what was most convenient.

But, it may be said, did not our own lineal ancestors, in this self-same island of Britain, go about, with no great inconvenience to themselves, almost as nude as these Egyptian hermits? If they were able thus to withstand the cold of winter, why should not we also be able?

Now, I opine that our ideas about the early Britons are largely romantic, and therefore unveracious. We think of them, when we have time to devote to such unprofitable musing, as the Romans, who fought with them, have sketched them for all time. They were bronzed, massy-shouldered, long-haired individuals, wearing nothing but a girth band: and thus they fought with the armoured soldiers of Augustus and his successors.

It must be remembered, however, that the natives always terminated a campaign when the warm weather came to an end. They then went into winter quarters; and expected to see and hear nothing more about their enemies until the spring was well forward. How should the Romans know, therefore, what extra clothing the ancient Britons put on when the early frosts of October began to chill their bones? No doubt, in truth, these shaggy barbarians, men and women alike, clad themselves in as many sheep and calf skins as they could well carry during the cold months: and thus sufficiently justify us, their posterity, for our habitual use of clothes.

"It has been said that the body is the garment of the soul. Whether this be, or be not, merely a graceful metaphor, we might well somewhat expand it. Without the costume of the body, what individuality would our various souls possess—if we can imagine them primarily gifted with a sphere of existence like ours?" We should be little more enlivening as a human spectacle than a crowd of common hens' eggs. Similarly, were we all to live without the embellishment of dress, how tired the more innately æsthetic of us would infallibly become of the monotonous flesh tint, which would, of course, be the main colour of our personalities! Hence, just as the

original germ of our life is rendered distinctly more interesting to the eye in its garment of the body, so also the body itself gains new attractions by the garments with which convention and necessity have endued it. I dare say to one removed from our earth and well situated outside our solar system, an expansion of this simile would be possible. He would be able to discuss the different planets in their different garb of different atmospheres, even as we can discuss ourselves, our cotton gowns, and our calf-skin boots.

Of course, it is a moot question how far our health is affected by a complete surrender to fashion in the matter of the bulk of clothes which we wear. Who of us does not know this or that octogenarian who is fond of boasting that he has never worn an overcoat in his life?—his longevity is inevitably attributed to this fact. After all, however, it is but a feeble little vaunt. Why, if the principle be once accepted, did not the old man, in his younger days, gradually discard his other clothes also? He would then have dispensed with tailors and tailors' bills. But is it not probable that Fate would have balanced his scales for him in some other way? By his uncommon abstinence in coats and trousers, might he not have acquired so robust an appetite that the money, which hitherto was wont to go in garments, would have been claimed by the butcher and the baker? Clearly, in such a case—no unlikely case, either—it were more becoming to dress like the rest of the world, than to eat like two or three common men put together.

That gentle wit, Montaigne, in one of his essays, remarks: "I know not who it was that asked a beggar whom he saw in his shirt, in the depth of winter, as brisk as another muffled up to the ears in furs, how he could endure to go about so. 'Why, sir,' said he; 'you go with your face bare, but I am all face.'" It was a perception of this reference, and a sense of humiliation at seeing so many small Frenchmen, "whom he could have thrown down with a breath," walking without their hats, that made Horace Walpole systematically harden himself by exposure. He used to go on to his lawn at Twickenham, when the dew was thick, wearing a thin pair of slippers on his feet and nothing on his head. At the outset, this temptation of the demon, which the French were accustomed to call "le catch-cold," brought him a severe feverish influenza. But, when he

had conquered this, he was a privileged man for the rest of his long lifetime. "Draughts of air, damp rooms, windows open at his back, all situations in short, were alike to him." If one of his guests troubled because he seemed wilfully to expose himself to the weather, he would somewhat pettishly inform them: "My back is the same with my face, and my neck is like my nose." To this hardening process, and his habit of drinking iced water, the luxurious "dilettante," in great measure, attributed his eighty years of agreeable life. It would be interesting, as some sort of confirmation to Walpole's opinion, to get statistical information about the after life of our Bluecoat boys. Do they, as a rule, suffer from colds when they take up the common fashion of hat-wearing after they leave Newgate Street? And do any of them, later in life, abandon this vicious indulgence, and return to the lusty custom of their youth, with profit to their health as well as their purse?

Having already sufficiently admitted that it is on the whole beneficial for us to wear clothing, it would be curious to trace the history of apparel from its very beginning. Our philosophic naturalists talk much about their theory of the evolution of the human race from very low antecedents, and in the construction of their system are at a loss for at least one very important link. Why should we not in the same way deduce the evolution of fashion from the single girth band of early man? Which came first into court, the head or the feet? And how long a time elapsed between the establishment of the custom of wearing a feather in the hair and a bone through the gristle of the nose, and the serious step of the conception of primeval shirt? Had climate or the inborn vanity of human beings the more concern in the dissemination of those thin first rudiments of fashion, which have, in our day, developed into the myriad of drapers, haberdashers, hatters, hosiers, and bootmakers' shops which we so naively accept as essential to our existence?

These are knotty questions which may be solved in volumes, not in a single essay. It is probable, however, that our forefathers received no small stimulus to their desire for decoration from the sight of the various plumage, dainty fur coats, etc., of the other wild denizens of their woods and forests. Imagine the train of ideas which might perplex a thick-headed aborigine in the depths of Brazil while he stood under a

gigantic tree contemplating the gorgeous adornments of a bird of Paradise. The bird was to him but a weak creature in a fine dress. Why should he not kill it and deck himself in its feathers? The deed done, one may conceive with what anxiety he either stole to the placid waters of the nearest lake and looked at his reflection, or strutted off to his miserable wigwam to ask his wife what she thought of him in his new shape. Perhaps, indeed, some such innovator by his sudden apparition to strangers in these remote solitudes, became the prototype of those eccentric, much befeathered divinities whom the Central Americans used to worship in effigy amid ghouliah sacrifices.

One can fancy how rapturously a weak chieftain in a barbarous community would welcome the institution of dress, even in its earliest stage, as a means of indicating his superiority. Hence, too, the sumptuary laws of our own land in those pre-Reformation days, when "dress was the symbol of rank." How emphatic the distinction between a baron of the fourteenth century, "dressed in authority," and his spiritless half nude villeins! It is an old saying that a man well dressed is twice a man. Neither in such times, when the coat marks the rank, nor now when all fashion bows to the democratic broadcloths, can it be genuinely confessed that

'Tis better to be lowly born!

Clothes serve many purposes nowadays. Whatever their original meaning, in these days they are worn often less from vanity or as a source of warmth than as a decoy. Like conversation, according to Talleyrand, they rather conceal than advertise the circumstances of their wearer. The man who, three centuries ago, had he then lived, would have been magnificent in puffed breeches of silk and satin, in the Victorian era, leaves the profusion of jewellery and dazzling neckties, which have come to be held as a mark of wealth, to fishmongers and publicans in holiday attire.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with
gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks:
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.

So it was, no doubt, when poor old King Lear uttered his wail, and the moral of his words is, of course, as good now as it was then.

Thus, in effect, clothes may be said to

increase the complexity of social intercourse. If we could associate one with another, as soul with soul, divested of the distractions of flesh and bones, this would be ideal society. The incumbrance of a body has, however, to be accepted, and the little cases and peculiarities of the body much obstruct the free communion of soul with soul. Moreover, the body hides the soul, sometimes very completely; so that intercourse between two individuals who, as mere souls, would have had not a word to say to each other, may be carried on in a manner wholly artificial and strained, and, therefore, unprofitable. But, add to this, the confusion of real personalities which dress also introduces, and it is often vain in the extreme for a man to ask himself, "who's who!" We are in a double wrapping of unreality, and many of us spend a lifetime in futile seeking for true congenial spirits. The habit of disguise is thrust on us by nature and our ancestors, and we pay the penalty for all. No wonder the philosopher, who condescends to discuss the subject of clothing, finds language halt in the expression of his intense irony towards coats and their wearers in general.

Nevertheless, it seems a pity that so many honest people have wasted good indignation upon a theme which is, after all, innocent in comparison with others. Take the following verse from a clever series of stanzas, all equally harsh:

If there's one cause
Beyond other that draws
My utmost scorn and loathing,
'Tis the fuss fools make,
And the pains they take,
About their outward clothing.

Surely, since we are now obliged to be clothed, it is well to be particular how we are clothed. The maxim which reminds us that "appearances are deceitful," is on all tongues; but few of us are able to remember it on the rare occasions when such remembrance might have been of use to us. And if it be true—as no doubt it is—"that a stranger of tolerable sense, dressed like a gentleman, will be better received by those of quality above him, than one of much better parts whose dress is regulated by the rigid notions of frugality," this may, at least, be a lesson to us to take pains about our outward clothing, while, at the same time, we must be ready to discern the worth that often underlies a shabby dress or a threadbare coat.

A KNOT CUT.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

A WOMAN stood for a moment on the landing, looking down at the crowd, which the two policemen at the head of the staircase were driving back. Men, women, and even children, were surging up the narrow staircase, inspired by a morbid curiosity to try and get a glimpse of that attic door, which shut in the dreadful spectacle of murder.

A man lay in that room, stabbed through the heart. It was the ghastly stream of his blood, spilt by his brother man, trickling sluggishly beneath the doorway, which had first drawn attention to his end.

Hoarse voices speculated as to the cause and time of the crime. The police were besieged with questions, which they could not answer, though they put on a wise, impenetrable, superior kind of air, as if they could say much on the subject if they only cared to do so.

The door of the house had stood open most of that day, for there were workmen about it, doing repairs after the dilatory, happy-go-lucky fashion in which poor people's houses are generally treated. The murderer must have come and gone, with the people, who were coming and going all day long, in that overcrowded tenement.

The winter day was short. The dusk of a November evening set in soon, and the fog and the drizzling rain had made the twilight darker. He had probably come as the afternoon was closing in; one of the many children in the house had heard the murdered man singing in his room at his dinner-hour. Public indignation was all the greater, because the man had been a universal favourite.

The woman standing on the landing heard all this discussed. She had heard it discussed by the crowd outside, standing staring up at the house as if its dreadful secret were written on its walls. She had heard every possible theory as to the murderer and his motive suggested, as she forced her way up the staircase; everybody, who recognised her as "the young woman who lived in the next attic" to that occupied by the dead man, called out to her what had happened.

She had been away all day at her work, and only learned the news on her return. The police let her pass when she told them that she lived up there. She stopped on

the landing and looked down at the excited, upturned faces. One man, one of the foremost in the crowd, a slightly-built, quiet-faced young man, dressed like a respectable workman, who had not added any theory to all those eagerly propounded about him, but had stood with his hands in his pockets, apathetically staring at the guarded door, looked up with a curious, sudden swiftness as she looked down.

As it happened, her eyes, with a suppressed, expectant watchfulness of vision, taking in the whole of those upturned faces, were resting really on his. Perhaps it was rather her other senses which were conveying to her mind the consciousness of that eager, vengeance-excited crowd of men and women; and she only saw, in reality, that one pale, quiet face. For, as their eyes met—a sudden shock like that of an electric current flowing from him to her—set her quivering with a fear and a repulsion, and she suddenly cared nothing for the rest of that crowd. They might have been puppets in some mimic show. They were nothing. It was only this one man, with that strange, terrible keenness of vision, against whom she had to guard.

She turned and went into her room, shutting to the door upon her.

"Who is that?" asked the workman of the policemen.

"Janet Malone, sempstress."

CHAPTER II.

It was three weeks after the murder. Life in 108, Trevorton Street, had gone back into its usual routine. The murder was still a mystery; but the dead man had been buried. The police no longer haunted the street. Even the murdered man's room had a new lodger. The young workman, whom Janet Malone had noticed, had taken the room. As yet, few in the house had seen him, and still fewer had exchanged any words with him. People looked rather askance at him for taking such a lodging, at least, so soon after the tragedy. But he showed himself rather taciturn and reserved to his new neighbours, and quite indifferent to their opinions. His work was irregular, or else he was lazy, for he went in and out in a desultory fashion; sometimes spending the whole day in his room, and only going out late in the evening, returning when all the respectable occupants of the house were in bed. On other days he would go out early, and be away all day. If everybody in that

house had not been too much engaged in solving the problem of existence to notice it, they might have discovered that his restless, indifferent air was but a cloak to the most intense watchfulness. When he was alone that listlessness would fall from him, and every movement would betray an alert decision which boded ill for the person who had been deceived by his appearance of languor, and his eyes would brighten into that keenness of vision which had so terrified Janet Malone.

She had not met him again. She did not even know that he had taken the room next to hers. She made the discovery one day, about ten days after he had been in the house. She recognised him at once. Indeed, his face, with its quiet, vigilant power, had haunted her since the day of the murder.

The workmen had left their work in the house half-finished. One of the repairs to which they had had to attend, was the chimney in her room. Some days, according to the wind, the smoke, instead of going up, poured down into the room in a manner almost intolerable. She had made endless complaints to the agent of the landlord, but nothing had been done, and now the workmen had once more gone away without rectifying the chimney. This evening, when she came home from her work and lighted her fire, the smoke was worse than ever. Half-suffocated, she flung open her door, and stepped out into the landing. At the same moment—so close upon it, that it almost seemed as if the opening of her door had been the signal for him to open his—the young workman appeared in his doorway. Janet recognised him through the wreaths of smoke rolling up between them. She shrank back, under the shock of his unexpected presence.

"Is your room on fire?" he asked. "What a smoke!"

"No." She had recovered herself. "It is my chimney."

She laughed, but shivered at the same moment, as if with cold. He knew that it was not physical cold that had made her shudder; but he glanced up at the open trap-door overhead. It was left open to allow the smoke from her room to escape. Through it could be seen the broken roof, from which the rain was dropping to the landing where they stood.

His face blackened.

"It's infamous! The house isn't fit for a dog."

"The landlord apparently thinks it is fit for human beings," she said, bitterly. And then, in a kinder tone, "I am afraid you find that open trap-door disagreeable. But I am obliged to have it open, or we should be suffocated with the smoke."

"Oh! I don't mind. But you—you must have been perished these last bitter days."

She made an impatient movement.

"One gets used to everything."

"Philosophy!" He laughed, wondering again as he had so often wondered during the past fortnight when he had secretly watched her comings and goings, and listened to her voice, how it happened that a woman of such refinement should be living in her position. He had been educated in a different position himself, and knew that these rough work-people about her were not of her order. "Let me come in and look at your chimney," he added. "I am a Jack of all trades."

She hesitated a second, then without speaking led the way into her room. He followed. The room was full of smoke, and just as they entered a violent gust of wind brought down an avalanche of soot and rubbish on the fire, extinguishing the feeble flames which were already almost succumbing to adverse circumstances. With a dismayed cry, they both rushed to the fireplace. He insisted upon clearing up the place for her, and they grew quite sociable as they laughed and talked over the catastrophe in her exquisitely clean and neat room.

When some sort of order was re-established, he would take no denial to his request, that she should come in and have a cup of tea by his fire. She yielded at last. She was cold and tired, and had come home from her work, with all a woman's longing for a cup of tea. The boiling of her own kettle looked hopeless, and he had been very kind. Yet it cost her a terrible effort to cross the threshold of that room. Though he talked away cheerfully, and did not seem to look at her, he saw the faint shuddering hesitation in the doorway. He put her a chair near the fire, and making his tea, poured her out a cup and cut her some bread and butter. She sat leaning back in her chair watching him. It was long since she had been waited on like this. It took her back to old days when——

She relentlessly drove back the thought. She was a workwoman now. He sat

at the table drinking his own tea, and talking sensibly and pleasantly upon various topics; but he was gradually leading up to one.

"Yes, one might really think poverty a crime, it takes a man into such strange places. For instance, my coming to this room. It is not pleasant exactly, but the landlord has taken off a little of the rent owing to the recent event; and dead men don't trouble the living. And you too—you have not felt it necessary to change your room?"

"As you say, poor people cannot always follow their fancies."

"You are sensible. Why should you go to the expense and bother of moving? The dead man is at peace. So apparently is his murderer! I wonder what the police are about."

"The police, like a good many other people, may make a wrong start to begin with; and each step naturally only leads them farther from their goal."

"You mean that they may base their conclusions on an error," he said abstractedly.

"The first thing is, doubtless, to find out the right motive for the crime," he went on. "In the case of this Patrick O'Connor it was certainly not robbery; it was probably personal revenge."

"Probably, as the murderer took nothing."

"Or there are such things as secret societies; for this man, from all accounts, could scarcely have had a personal enemy. He may have failed the society he belonged to, and was therefore marked out for vengeance."

She answered him quietly, her manner being perfectly self-possessed. But he saw by her eyes that he was torturing her. They were the windows of her soul, which was rebelling, fluttering, crying out against his merciless treatment. He had seen enough—for the present—and he let her go. He turned the conversation. She talked a few moments more, and then rose.

He rose, too, and, as he bid her good-bye, a sudden discovery he made, fell on him like a shock. She was a beautiful woman. Up to this moment, he had seen in her only a tired, haggard-faced woman, with heavy eyes and pale lips.

Now, though she was outwardly so quiet, her cheeks and lips were tinged with a crimson of intense excitement, and her eyes were brilliant with that same suppressed pain and fear. The manhood in

him was suddenly stirred to its foundations by her beautiful, suffering womanhood.

"I was right," he said, as he stood alone staring into his fire. "She knows all about it. It was a wise thing coming here. She has some motive, too, for staying in the house; that motive may guide me to the plans of the murderer."

Nothing showed more clearly how powerfully she had moved him, than the fact that his previous suspicion that she had been an accomplice in the deed had completely vanished. The murder had only been known to her after it was done; of that he was now certain. She must be shielding some one through affection, or fear; she, too, might be a member of that secret society to which he had already found out the murdered man belonged.

CHAPTER III.

THAT evening began an acquaintance which continued. Janet tried hard, at first, to break it off; but she yielded, at last, to the gentle, but irresistible, persistence he brought to bear on her. There were moments when she became conscious of this quiet but relentless will which had mastered her own, in this simple matter of acquaintanceship, and then she was filled with fear, and rebelled against it, only to succumb again to the charm she really found in his society.

These moments of anger and revolt became rarer as the days went on. After all, it was pleasant to have a companion to whom she could talk as to an equal. For he, too, she was certain, came from a different class to that surrounding him. He was educated, clever, refined; but, as she kept her past to herself, so did he his, and they were both contented to take the present, as it was.

He had fallen into a way of almost daily meeting her, as she came home from her work, and not a day passed without their exchanging greetings and seeing each other for, at least, a few moments, either in the house or streets.

Her old fear of him vanished, and, day by day, some subtle sympathy, to be felt but not expressed, drew them closer to each other. It was such a relief to her loneliness. How lonely she had been during the last few years she did not know till she felt what this companion was to her now. It was such a relief to that gnawing, horrible

fear of anticipation which had haunted her solitude, ever since the day of the murder. Every moment might bring to her what she dreaded, with such dreadful, shrinking repulsion. She was terrified at being alone.

This simple, pleasant, frank friendship between her and Mark Grey was a very haven of refuge and peace from her own unrestful loneliness, and that thing which she dreaded. But it was coming near her, very near; and as she walked and talked with this man, she little knew that it was he who, in another life to the one he showed to her, was ruthlessly driving it on.

She had once asked him what his work was. But he had evaded her question. He had a curious and growing dislike now to meet her eyes after he had deceived her in an answer. She thought he worked too hard, for he seemed as she talked to him one afternoon, about a month after she had known him, to have grown paler and thinner, while at moments his face had a harassed look. She made some remark about it. He answered her in a constrained and rather cold manner. For the next three days she saw nothing of him. He did not even sleep in the house. It was at the end of these three days that she discovered by the loneliness caused by his absence, how pleasant their companionship had been. She came home that third evening, feeling the old weary listlessness and indifference of life; but as she turned the handle of her door all that was swept away, in the great and shuddering horror that fell upon her. That which she had dreaded, had come. Her door was locked on the inside. She had never fastened it since the day of the murder, on the morning of which she had accidentally left it unlocked. Since then, she had always left it unfastened, so that the room might be a refuge in case some miserable hunted fugitive from justice, might fly there. There had been no pity in her action. Pity was turned into hate, and lay cold at her heart as the murdered love which had once been between her and that fugitive. It was a mere sense of moral obligation. She was bound to this fugitive by hated fetters, but she was bound, and she was compelled to help him.

"It is I," she breathed rather than spoke.

The door was opened, and she faced a tall, powerfully-built man, whose face and figure were so terribly worn by hunger,

need, desperation, exhaustion, that for a second she scarcely recognised him, and stood gazing at him. He pulled her into the room with a fierce, hunted look in his eyes, and closed and locked the door again.

"Why have you come here?" she gasped in a low, hoarse voice. "When——"

He laughed a harsh sinister laugh.

"So you found out that I had been there! Well, he was a traitor!"

"Oh, the wickedness of it! He was an honest, happy, hard-working man; his only crime that he had once been one of yours."

"Look here!" with a savage, cruel threatening in his eyes. "Don't talk of what you don't understand! Get me food and let me rest. I have been hunted down like a wild beast since that day. The police, curse them, have been on my track ever since. I could not get out of the country. I have gone without food, shelter, warmth. But I have given them the slip. They will hardly think I have doubled back here. How did you know that I was here that day?"

"When I came home I found that I had left my door unfastened, and when I came in I saw the red marks of fingers on the box where my money was kept. The money was gone. Only you knew the secret of the lock; besides, I knew you had a personal grudge against——"

"Curse you! He was a traitor! Give me something to eat. I have starved for two days."

She prepared a meal for him, and he sat down and ate it wolfishly. She could not even pity him for the awful hunger he must have felt to eat like that. She began to be afraid of the hate in her heart. She felt sick with it. To see him sitting there in her room, which she had kept unpolluted from his presence for three years, filled her with a desperate, wild loathing and rage. She could not look at him, speak to him.

By-and-by, when the food, and warmth, and rest had strengthened him a little, and he could think of other things beside his own desperate, hunted self, he looked at her, and something maliciously amused, and yet cruel and angry, leapt into his eyes.

"You aren't pleased to see me," he said, with a laugh. "It isn't dutiful," and he flung out his arm as she passed him and caught her to him.

"How dare you!" She had wrenched

herself free and caught up a knife from the table at the same moment. "If you touch me—speak to me—I will stab you to the heart."

He was cowed by the splendour of her passion, her anger, and he fell back sullen, enraged; but remembering that he was for the moment in her power, he cursed her under his breath, and then flung himself down on the bed to sleep.

She could scarcely breathe in the same atmosphere as he did, and yet she did not dare leave the room. Suppose Mark Grey came and found him there.

The quick, light footsteps she knew so well came running up the staircase outside her room. Before her tortured brain could think what she must do, they stopped at her door. There was a quick, eager tapping on it. She sprang to her feet, and ran to it, opened it, and passed out on to the landing, closing it swiftly behind her.

Mark Grey stood there waiting for her. Some powerful feeling stirring him, touched her, and she knew before he had spoken that this was not the Mark Grey she had hitherto known. But she had no time to wonder what the change was. He caught her hands in his. She felt them burning her.

"It seems so long since I have seen you, Janet. May I call you Janet——?"

"Hush!" she whispered in a sharp voice that pierced her own ears, "you must not speak so loudly. My husband is in there asleep——"

"Your husband!" His burning hands went suddenly cold as death, and their chill struck to her heart. "Your husband, Janet?"

"Yes. Her husband!" The door of the room was flung open, and Joseph Malone stood in the light falling from the room on to the dark landing, his eyes ablaze with jealousy and fury.

"So this is why you would not kiss me! You——"

"Hush! Joseph! Oh, hush!" She pressed her hand against his lips to check the foul words upon them. "Go back, unless you wish to kill me."

But he stood for a second like a man turned suddenly to stone. The light from the room fell full on the white, set face of the other man, and as the mist of fury cleared from Malone's eyes, he saw that face plainly for the first time. He drew back instinctively into the room, and she followed, swiftly shutting the door between them and Mark Grey.

"Why did you risk so much by showing——?" she began and then stopped, terrified by the look on his face.

"You vile traitor!" he hissed, "to sell me to the police. Don't pretend you don't understand, or I will choke the lie in your throat. That is Jermyn, the detective, who has been hunting me down like a blood-hound. But I will——"

He pulled out a revolver from his breast. But, with a cry, she sprang between him and the door.

"He shall not touch you! You are my husband! And——"

She was out of the room before she had finished her sentence. She heard steps a little heavy and uncertain, descending the staircase, and she ran down to overtake them.

CHAPTER IV.

MARK JERMYN had no distinct consciousness of going out of the house into the street. He had come to see her that night because the love which had grown up in his heart for her had overmastered him at last. Three days before he had been on the verge of betraying himself. But he had conquered. He must succeed first in the task set him to do, of hunting down not only a murderer but a traitor.

Some other thought, too, governed him. He knew that she had some interest in the man he was bringing to justice—not the interest of love. He, with wonderful keenness of perception, both natural and trained, had discovered that this murderer was an abhorrence to her. But still she shielded him. And a sense of honour and delicacy intensely strong, in spite of the profession he followed, forbade his trying to win her love till he could first show himself in his natural colours. He had remembered that another day or two must bring his task to its end. The net, which not only caught this red-handed fugitive from justice, but a gang of evil confederates, was closing in on them. This very night his plans were to be put into execution. It would be a proceeding of no little peril, and he had come to have one last look at her in case——

And now when he had thought his quarry secure in a totally different quarter of London, he found him in the very house where—— All the mortification of his baffled plans—and it would have been cruel enough at another time—was swallowed up in the greater passions

rending his heart. This man—this murderer, round whose neck he had with such matchless skill and patience been twisting a halter—was her husband! And he had not even known that any man had called her wife! He stood outside, gazing across the street, his eyes dark, and burning with suffering, jealousy, bitterness.

Why had she not told him?

"Mark!" She stood by his side. For the first time she used his Christian name. The name by which she had hitherto called him was not his; and she could not use this other, which showed him to be the dead man's avenger. He did not stir nor speak, and she laid her hand on his arm. "Mark," she said again, "I never told you because I was so ashamed that such a man had called me wife. We were married seven years ago. I was a girl then—only eighteen—foolish, ignorant, romantic. I met him in America; he was over there posing as a martyr for his country—Ireland. He was eloquent, enthusiastic about the bitter wrongs of his country and people, and I believed him." Her voice broke into a more passionate note, but she quelled it. "I believed that he was a brave patriot, who had given his all for his country, and was being shamefully persecuted by its oppressors. I married him, and found him to be a liar—rapacious, revengeful, cruel! Instead of having given up all for his country, he was growing rich out of the poor and ignorant who trusted him. I learned to hate, despise, and fear him. After a time I left him, and have lived as you know how. And now to add to his crimes he has committed this last most dreadful one of all—and still I come to you to plead for his life, though he has been the anguish of mine."

She knew the man to whom she was pleading; some desperate, dumb fear of herself guided her to the knowledge. If she could plead for that miserable wretch, he could crush his own feelings and listen. It was no time for love; and yet she knew that he loved her as she loved him. But between them this unspoken love lay like a naked sword, commanding their faith and purity. And she could see but one way to obey that command—to spare the man who kept their lives apart. He understood her. But his mind refused to submit, because of another element warring in it.

There was love! If he let this man escape, he lost his love. Fear! For if he laid his hand on this man, might it not be

a treacherous revenge for the love he was losing? But amid this tumult of heart-voices, another spoke, and it grew louder and clearer. Duty! If he let this man go, he was a traitor himself. He had had his orders. Till to-night he had obeyed such orders as an honourable man should. Yet if he obeyed to-night, would not she turn from him as a coward who had sacrificed this rival for the sake of his love? She could not see this duty. She was arguing desperately against their love to save their honour. But there was this other call——

And then suddenly, all fear of her misunderstanding him vanished. The clouds of stormy passion cleared from his brain. He had always made duty a plain path to his feet. And now in this moment of his supreme ordeal, the simple rectitude of his life saved him.

"Janet," he said quietly, though his voice was fainter for the storm that had shaken him, "I cannot do what you ask."

She fell back against the railing, clasping it with her hand to steady herself. All hesitation gone now, he ran up the steps leading to the house door. It was ajar as she had left it. Though the scene might have taken an age if measured by the passion of it, it had in reality passed in a few seconds. But now that he was acting again, every second lost seemed precious as an hour. What, if his quarry had escaped? He ran upstairs with swift, light feet, drawing his revolver as he went. The man was powerfully built and desperate. If he had met any men on his way upstairs, he would have told them to guard the door and the windows in case—but only a woman came out of one of the rooms as he passed, and he had no time to stay and seek help. He must grapple with the murderer alone. His only fear now was, that he had escaped by the back of the house.

Oh! Why had he lost even those few seconds? He reached the landing—there was no sound from the closed door of Janet's room.

He tried the handle. It was locked on the inside, for, bending swiftly to look, he saw the key showing dark against the light in the room.

With a mighty effort, he flung himself with his whole force against the door. The frail lock gave way, and bursting open the door, Jermyn sprang into the room. To see that Joseph Malone had escaped. The room was as he had always seen it,

when, in passing, he had caught a glimpse into its purity of neatness and cleanness. The only disorder were the remains of that supper left on the table, and the disarranged coverlet, upon which the murderer had flung himself mud-stained, weary, sullen, and full of hate of the woman who had done her best to save him. And he lay now across her hearth, beyond the reach of justice as of human help, done to death by his own desperate, despairing hand. This was his last way of escape from the halter already closing round his neck. Patrick O'Connor was avenged, and a problem of love and life solved.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

THE doings of Kings, and Queens, and Royal persons generally, are the subject of a good deal of very laudable curiosity. How they live, and where they live, is a subject of never-ending interest to people who otherwise have but little concern with them. Why should we not be interested about those who have for ages exercised, and will continue to exercise, so much influence over human affairs? And with the Monarch in popular imagination is firmly connected the Palace, which is the Monarch's usual residence. Mention Louis the Fourteenth, and the Palace of Versailles rises pictured in the mind's eye—its magnificence and its meanness, the gilded saloons, the frowzy garrets, the parks, the fountains, and the muddy roads, where the Royal carriage sticks in the mire. With the Monarchy of Prussia one always connects Potsdam—solid, rigid, and in the view of all the world. And can we imagine the Hapsburgs without their Schönbrunn, or the Brunswicks apart from Herrenhausen, or the Dutch Royalties without The Hague? In the same way for the first half of Her Majesty's reign, Buckingham Palace and Queen Victoria were indissolubly associated in people's minds.

And the life that gathered about the Palace was one in which the multitude might share. Country people hung about the railings to get a peep at Majesty, and were quite disappointed, and even indignant, if told that the Queen was elsewhere. And all the season through the Royal standard floated almost continually from its tall staff. And the Palace, too, seemed to share in what there was of weal or woe that was current in the world. Past the Palace filed the ponderous

funeral train of the great Duke of Wellington. And witness that "bleak March day" in 1854, when the Guards mustered, and marched past the Palace on their way to the Crimea, while the Queen and Prince Consort watched them from the balcony. The March day was in February, and we have "Her Majesty's own words," written in her diary, to the effect that the day was not bleak. "We stood on the balcony to see them," writes the Queen, "the morning fine, the sun shining over the Towers of Westminster." But that is a picture, too, to abide in the memory. And then there was the marriage of "Unser Fritz" and our own eldest daughter—England's eldest daughter. And don't we remember the scene outside the Palace that day; and how we clung to the railings; and frantically cheered the newly-married pair? And so without further ado let us make the Palace the subject of a visit and a paper. First, as to how it came there, and how it got its name.

In the second year of his reign, George the Third, who found the Palace of Saint James's not to his taste as a residence, purchased the mansion known as Buckingham House, "dull, dowdy, and decent—a large, respectable-looking, red-brick house," as it is described by a writer of the period. The original builder of the house was John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire and Normanby, and he had acquired the site by purchase in 1703, when the earlier building, known as Arlington, and before that as Goring House, which formerly stood there, had been pulled down. The site itself seems originally to have formed part of St. James's Park, and in the reign of James the First was planted with mulberry trees, and became known as the Mulberry Gardens.

A princely palace on that space does rise
Where Sedley's noble muse found mulberries.

The allusion being to a play of Sir Charles Sedley, bearing the title of the Mulberry Garden, the scene of which is on this very spot.

These Mulberry Gardens—there was another in Clerkenwell, on the site of the House of Detention—formed part of a project conceived by James the First, for introducing the culture of silkworms and the manufacture of silk into England. The mulberry trees were designed to afford food for the silkworms, and mulberries and silkworms together were placed under the charge of an official keeper, and

in 1629 we find Walter, Lord Ashton, in possession of the office, with a salary and official residence, all his rights in which he sold to Lord George Goring who gave his name to the original Goring House. During the Civil Wars the place shared the fate of the other Royal parks, and was sold to private hands; but the Mulberry Gardens continued open as a place of resort during the Commonwealth, and John Evelyn, in 1656, describes a visit to the gardens—then almost the only place of amusement open to the Londoners.

With the Restoration came back the Gorings to their rights, which were disposed of presently to Lord Arlington, who called the house after his own name. Besides being one of the Cabal, his lordship is notable as having "in the year of the great Plague brought from Holland the first pound of tea imported into England." And thus the house which may be said to have been founded by silkworms, was also, probably, consecrated by the first libations of tea poured out in these realms. The Mulberry Gardens, still in full swing, were not, however, converted all of a sudden into tea-gardens. Pepys visits them and finds them not to his liking; but a second visit, with more cheerful friends to eat a Spanish "olio," makes amends, and the whole party are mighty merry over their fare. Nor must we "forget the mulberry tarts which Dryden loved," the attractions of which and of the company of fair dames, often brought the poet to the Mulberry Gardens.

But when my Lord of Buckingham comes into possession, we hear nothing more of the Mulberry Gardens, which seem to have been absorbed in the more extensive entourage of the new mansion. As the man who gave his name to the now Royal Palace—a name already historical, and so familiar to the ear that people rarely question whence it comes—as the sponsor, then, of this Royal abode, John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, requires a short notice. As a poet, soldier, courtier, statesman, the friend of Dryden, and the boon companion of King Charles, the Duke was a notable figure in his time. Fighting the Dutch in the great naval battle of Solebay; Gentleman of the Bed-chamber to Charles the Second; Governor of Hull; Colonel of the old Holland Regiment; Governor of Tangier, whither he sailed in command of a large force; Lord Chamberlain at the Court of James the Second; he proved himself a many-sided man, with a higher opinion of

his own deserts than general estimation allowed. People called him Lord Allpride; and, perhaps, it was with some notion of alighted merit that caused him to espouse the cause of the Revolution, and become a "persona grata" at the Court of William and Mary.

"Pro Rege sæpe, pro Republicâ semper," is the proud, but not unworthy motto, that heads the epitaph on his stately tomb in Westminster Abbey. Anyhow, whatever his leading motives, he was made Marquis and Duke by the new monarchs. The Duke married, for his third wife, Catherine Darnley, daughter of James the Second by Catherine Sedley, and this was the "Princess Buckingham" of Horace Walpole's time, whose pride was as notable as her husband's, as she always exacted from those about her the honours due to Royal blood. Walpole tells the story of her death-bed, how she concerned herself with the draperies of her funeral pomp, and how "she made her ladies vow to her that if she should lie senseless, they would not sit down in the room before she was dead." The Princess, like her husband, died at Buckingham House, and shared his grave in Westminster Abbey. And it was after her death—for there were no descendants left, and the dukedom was now extinct—that Buckingham House was sold to George the Third, with whom it was ever after a favourite residence. In 1775 the place was settled upon Queen Charlotte, in exchange for Somerset House, which had formerly been regarded as the Royal Dower-house, and, from that time, till the new Palace was built, it was generally known as the Queen's House.

It was at Buckingham House that King George was staying when the Gordon Riots occurred, and, while the mob had possession of St. James's Palace, the house was surrounded by several thousand troops, who bivouacked about the courts and gardens, and in St. James's Park. There was no straw for the men to sleep on, and none could be obtained for love or money. The King walked about among the soldiers and explained to them that, for the worth of his crown, he could not then get a load of straw; but he would share their watch, and all that there was in his cellars in the way of liquor should be served out to them. At Buckingham House, all George's children were born, except the future George the Fourth, who came into the world at St. James's Palace.

When George the Fourth came to the

throne he wanted little of three-score years; but he began to build on a scale as if he expected a long lease of sovereignty. As Thackeray sarcastically proposed to inscribe on his statue, among his other achievements, "He built the palaces of Brighton and of Buckingham." But although he built, yet he did not live to inhabit Buckingham Palace. As William the Fourth did not care for the place, the Palace remained practically an empty shell till Victoria came to the throne, when it was furnished for the reception of the new monarch.

As George the Fourth's architect, John Nash—who also built that curious structure known as the Pavilion at Brighton—left the Palace, it formed three sides of a square, with its principal front to the west; that is, with its back to St. James's Park; and overlooking the beautiful gardens and extensive lake that lie there secluded from the public eye. During the early part of the present reign the fourth side of the square was completed by building the present frontage to St. James's Park, an operation which added a great amount of space; but which cut off a considerable amount of light and made many of the corridors and apartments rather gloomy.

There are few places in London, in any way to be regarded as show places, so difficult to gain admission to as Buckingham Palace; and even if you have the entrée, and attend Courts and Drawing Rooms, your knowledge of the Palace will probably be confined to the chief State apartments. But the world in general is confined to a view of its outward aspect only; its iron gates and railings; the great desert of gravel in front; the façade crowned with figures of Saint George and Britannia armed with spear and trident. Then there is the long crescent-line of wall, surmounted by vases; the sentry-boxes below, with the Guards, in their tall bearskins, pacing up and down, with the tympanum of the riding-school peering above, and a bas-relief of Theseus—if it be Theseus, and prancing horses. Those sober red-brick buildings follow, the Royal Mews, with their gateway and clock turret—it still keeps good time, that clock, to which Government clerks, of a morning, cast inquiring glances, as they hurry by, none too soon, for their offices in Whitehall—and that brings us to Arabella Row. Dear old Arabella! there she is, prim and as old-fashioned as ever, among clubs, mansions, hotels, that are springing up all around;

and thence up Grosvenor Place, you still have on one hand a tall dead wall with trees showing above, and straggling shoots of ivy and creepers, and the dead wall you may follow into the whirl and bustle about Hyde Park Corner, and so down Constitution Hill till you reach the railings of Buckingham Palace once more. It is something of a walk, too, for it embraces forty acres of grounds and acres of water, all those stables for the Queen's horses and houses for the Queen's men, as well as the Queen's coaches—forty carriages, at least, besides the great gilded coach of State, and goodness knows how many horses; but the cream-coloured Hanoverians are among them, lovely in hue but small in size, which only appear with the State coach, and on State occasions.

Within this magic circle a quiet seclusion reigns; surrounded by the turmoil and traffic of London, here hardly a sound is heard. You may traverse endless corridors, innumerable rooms, vast halls and gilded chambers, and never meet a soul. It is like the enchanted palace in the heart of which sleeps a beautiful princess; and it is as well guarded, too, not by thorns and briars, but by the bayonets of Grenadiers, and, more effective still, by the vigilance of a strong body of police.

In approaching a palace everything depends on your degree. If a reigning Monarch, the big gates fly open, the guard turns out. A simple Prince must be content with one of the battants open, and a general salute. My Lord Duke enters at a side gate; but as for an ordinary mortal, the best thing he can do is to throw himself upon the mercy of the first policeman he sees.

"How am I to get into the Palace?"

"You might try the equerry's gate," is the reply.

The equerry's gate is big enough to admit a coach-and-four, and strong enough to resist anything short of artillery; but there is a wicket gate like that in "Pilgrim's Progress," and a huge hanging bell-handle, a tug at which does not produce the sonorous vibrations you might expect. But here is a servant in the Royal livery, with a policeman behind him, the latter of whom proves to be the leading spirit—the guiding spirit too, for he leads the way at once into the recesses of the Palace, dim, half-lighted regions, where huge pillars and buttresses appear that sustain the foundations of this mighty pile, with narrow corridors between, which seem to penetrate

into the very bowels of the earth. Then daylight breaks once more, and here we are in a little office—where? Who can say?—somewhere between Pimlico and Piccadilly.

But here at any rate is a gentleman, who with the Queen's permission has kindly undertaken to see us through the Palace; one who knows Palaces by heart—Buckingham, Osborne, Windsor, aye, and the old Pavilion, which was as well worth seeing as any of them; Holyrood, too, and saw no ghosts there—not pale Mary with her hair unbound, nor Rizzio with gaping wounds, nor evil Darnley, nor any of the fated House of Stewart—no, not one. "Besides, if I have," says our guide, with a twinkle of the eyes, "I am sworn to secrecy." Well, there are no evil memories about Buckingham Palace, everything belongs to our own period; memories there are tender and pathetic, but these belong to every dwelling-place where inmates have come and gone. Stay, there is one room, a handsome, dignified room, with columns, and the quiet, reposeful air of the last century—the kernel of the place as it were—a bit of old Buckingham House, enshrined in the vast new Palace; a room that has seen hoops, and powder, and patches, flowered sacques and embroidered waistcoats; but before reaching this we pass through gallery and corridor, and suites of handsome rooms, which would make a palace of themselves one might think. It is a Palace "en papillote." Linen covers enclose all the costly furniture, pathways of drugget meander over the carpets; but there are the pictures, family portraits chiefly, and of domestic interest, and the cabinets, and the mirrors, and, above all, the china—yes, the Palace is strong in faience; here is old Chelsea in profusion, royal pieces delightful to the eyes of a connoisseur, but above, yes, in the halls above, there are treasures.

But that was the gallery of the elect which we saw just now, of those who have the "entrée" that is, Ambassadors, and Ministers, and high officials, who have an entrance to themselves and a separate staircase, so that they reach the presence free from the general crush, and by a "détour." We have reached a noble suite of rooms overlooking the terraces; the gardens, with trees now grey and leafless; the sward in its dull winter green; the lake that winds like a river between bosky glades. To see these grounds all grey and dull, in the winter haze, and yet with a soft melan-

choly calm about them, and contrast the scene they witnessed last June with gay barges on the lake, and gay costumes on the lawn, and everywhere groups of the highest and most distinguished in the land, whether in arms, or arts, or statesmanship, or birth, or wealth; yes, that was a sight such as the Palace could hardly have matched in the days when everybody was young and gay.

We may suppose, by the way, that the saloon in the centre of the garden front is the most charming room in the whole suite, where royalties might meet, in a stately manner of course, but in domestic rather than Royal state.

The State apartments invite us now, and here we come to something really Royal and magnificent. The "coup d'œil" of the grand marble staircase, with the galleries beyond, flanked with pictures, sculpture, and hangings; the noble Entrance Hall, with rows of massive marble columns; all this gives an impression of Royalty and State, and of the grandeur which encompasses the wearer of the ancient Crown of England. Taking the Ambassadors' Staircase, we come almost directly to the Throne Room. The unprivileged crowd who throng to the Royal Drawing Room, pass up the grand staircase, and, filing through various rooms and galleries, reach the presence by a more round-about way.

And in the Throne Room we have magnificence too; a noble room with emblazoned ceiling and alcove still more richly decorated, with massive crystal chandeliers, and a blaze of gold and colour. Too much gold, too much colour perhaps; and yet the whole is impressive, and, no doubt, for the ruler of an empire, Eastern as well as Western, a touch of barbaric glitter is allowable. But the Throne is a little disappointing. We think of the Peacock Throne of the Great Mogul, in which the Kohinoor glittered like a star among constellations of minor jewels, and we have imagined,

A throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormos or of Ind.

Although perhaps the plain oaken chair, containing the stone of destiny, which is to be seen at Westminster Abbey, appeals more strongly to the imagination than one encrusted with gold and jewels.

Close by is the Royal Retiring Room, to which only members of the Royal Family are allowed to penetrate, a room richly decorated and hung with many of the smaller gems of the pictures in the Royal

collection. But following in reverse order, the route pursued by those who attend, or are first presented at Her Majesty's Drawing Room, we traverse a series of noble rooms, which have now a handsome congregation of chairs awaiting the flocks of fair dames, and fresh and often lovely "débutantes," their turn to reach the Royal presence; all in the richest costumes with jewels, feathers, and long trains, the latter tucked over the arms of the wearers of them, till the very last barrier is reached. There, besides the two gentlemen-at-arms, who guard the doorway, are stationed two pages of honour, whose duty it is to spread out the flowing trains, and speed their owners into the presence, with all their plumes fully displayed. But at each door previously encountered is erected a gilded iron barrier, where stand two gentlemen-at-arms who admit by a gate at each side, one at a time, right and left; and the struggle at the barriers is often a severe one. But for these precautions, it is believed that the loyal and distinguished crowd of fair women would sweep before them the whole array of Court officials, and pour, in a tumultuous tumbled mass, into the Royal presence.

These rooms are cleared of most of their ordinary belongings to make room for the coming influx to the Drawing Room. But there is one of these rooms, with rich cabinets and tall mirrors reaching from floor to ceiling, which boasts of a certain mystery. A spring is touched close to one of the cabinets, and the seemingly solid wall, cabinet, mirror, and all, swings gently forward, and reveals a double door sunk in a recess, which gives access to the Royal retiring rooms. Our cicerone has often had the conduct of distinguished Eastern guests on a tour round the Palace. Chinese Mandarins with the crystal button, Japanese Ambassadors, and others from the realms of Ind, and generally has had occasion to admire the complete stolidness and unconcern displayed by such visitors; not a gleam from the yellows of those almond eyes, not a movement of the unruffled faces, showed either interest or admiration. But here in the sudden revelation of this secret entrance, was something that "fetched" these solemn men of the East, and aroused their interest and admiration. Indifference became hearty appreciation, and yellow eyes twinkled and yellow faces relaxed in wonder and delight.

We had been promised the sight of

treasures in the way of "faience" in the upper rooms of the Palace, and assuredly the promise was fulfilled; of old Sèvres the collection is magnificent—cabinets, full of rare vases; and beautiful pieces displayed to best advantage, in connection with costly buffets and rare and delicate marqueterie. Much of the porcelain was collected by George the Fourth, who had certainly a princely taste for richness and magnificence, with a full appreciation of good artistic workmanship.

Of the same Monarch's providing, too, are some wonderful specimens of old Chinese porcelain, to be found in the more private apartments—among others two wonderful old "dragon" vases, once at the Brighton Pavilion, at sight of which Chinamen themselves lift up their hands and exclaim: "Nothing finer in our country."

The pictures we have hitherto seen, have been chiefly of the modern school, and connected with events in the history of the reign of Victoria. Louis Philippe appears with his intelligent bourgeois face; and Napoleon, with his beautiful Empress, our ally against Nicholas, who in his turn presents himself, haughty, stern, and powerful, the very type of a despot. There is a good portrait, too, of the Emperor William of Germany, taken in 1848, when, as Crown Prince, he came here in the midst of revolutionary troubles, bringing with him the Crown jewels of Prussia, to be kept safe from possible emergencies.

The Emperor's son, the Crown Prince—the present Emperor privately visited the Palace last year, and remarked this portrait of his father. Who, when this picture was painted, could have seen the career that lay before this already middle-aged man; the conquest over two great empires; the unification of the German race; that he should live to be the foremost man in all this world!

A lively picture of the last half century might be put together from the walls of Buckingham Palace. There are weddings, Royal festivals, visits exchanged with foreign Courts; there are broken warriors returning from Crimean battle-fields to be decorated and rewarded by Royal hands; a Royal progress through this vale of tears is here emblazoned in colours before our eyes.

But the picture-gallery itself contains a really fine collection, chiefly of the Dutch School, with many paintings of immense

value. Rubens is fairly represented; there are some wonderfully fine Rembrandts. His "Shipbuilder and his Wife" is there, painted in 1633, a noble specimen of his work; and the "Portrait of a Fair Woman"—fair in complexion that is, for she is not beautiful—in a rich dress, is of wonderful depth and finish.

Teniers, too, has a jolly ale-house scene, with a couple of rustic figurants, who seem almost to dance out of the canvas; with others of his best.

Paul Potter, Cuyp, Wouvermans, Van der Velde, Greuze, are all represented; and English art is shown by Reynolds—but not Reynolds at his best. There is a portrait of the King somewhere, by Reynolds; but that we missed.

In one of the State rooms there are full-length portraits, by Gainborough, of King George and his Queen, but not at the artist's best; and one of his of a Princess, however—Duchess of Cambridge, surely—is full of grace and charm.

Then there is a pleasant little Wilkie Room, in which that master of genre painting is shown at his best in "Blind-man's Buff"—familiar to everybody in engravings—with other works not so important. And there are Winterhalter's portraits, which are also everywhere known from reproductions of all kinds.

Books of reference speak of a sculpture gallery in the Palace, but we did not see any. There are scattered works in bronze and marble, and, in a kind of alcove, two fine marble statues, by Gibson, of the Queen and Prince Consort; but the best of the Royal sculptures are, no doubt, at Windsor Castle.

A long day might be spent at the Palace, and ours was but a short one, and yet but a fragmentary impression would be retained of its treasures. What of the great Dining-room with its buffets loaded with gold plate! Ah! but you will not see the gold plate; all that securely reposes in some impregnable strong room, and only makes its appearance at State dinner parties. But the general impression will remain of a bewildering succession of innumerable grand apartments; of passing through crowds of folding doors, all yielding to the master-key of our conductor, but otherwise impenetrable. And the doors themselves deserve notice, those in the older part of the building especially: beautifully polished solid mahogany, of a colour! of a richness!! Such mahogany the richest millionaire in the world might sigh for in

vain. Trees such as produced that marvellous wood are now unknown, and hundreds of years would be required to produce their successors. But the mahogany we use now is but a pale shadow of the wood that was shaped and polished at the behest of the First Gentleman in Europe. Everywhere footsteps are muffled in the soft pile of the carpets; but this universal carpeting, although suitable enough for a winter palace, does not allow of the beautiful effects of the polished floors of Continental Palaces, the soft reflections and gleams of light, and the dim chiaroscuro. And the lights in the Palace are not good, except on the garden side; the somewhat gloomy central quadrangle, all shut in by heavy masonry, is certainly depressing. But at night, when the crystal chandeliers and the noble candelabra are gleaming with thousands of wax candles, with the great halls glowing with electric light, and powerful sunlights of gas shining from the lofty roofs, then with crowds of fair women with jewels and ravishing costumes, with lovely white shoulders and swan-like necks outshining all the rest, and brave men, and glittering uniforms, with the crash of music and the thrill of dancing feet, then can we fancy the Palace as indeed a scene of enchantment. And, after all, that is the kind of enchantment most people prefer to that of the Sleeping Beauty in a century of silence.

There is more to be described, no doubt. Perhaps we have said nothing about the Yellow Drawing-room, which an enthusiastic visitor may be forgiven for describing as heavenly. The South Drawing-room, too, may be admired. And then there is the finest sight of all—the State Ball-room, or Concert-hall, completed in 1856. It is used for both purposes, with an organ at one end, and what our ancestors would have called a singing gallery, which is supplemented on concert nights by a sufficient temporary orchestra, and at the other end the dais, where Royalties disport themselves on ball nights. This is a noble hall, well-proportioned, and admirable, as everybody says, in its acoustic properties, with its columns of porphyry, richly-carved ceiling, and elaborate ornamentation, and lighted both by incandescent electric lamps and sun-lights in the ceiling. Then there is the chapel, formerly a conservatory, but that has gone out of use—a small, domestic chapel, the roof supported by tall, gilt pillars, which came from the screen of Carlton House.

Besides the rooms of State and ceremony, the Palace contains a vast number of private apartments, consecrated to the use of the various members of the Royal Family. These rooms are arranged, each set with its own corridor—a prodigious length of corridor, too, which bears the name of the Royal personage it belongs to. Many of these more intimate apartments are charmingly furnished and decorated; there is a Breakfast-room, which may be called a reminiscence of the Pavilion, with China monstera, and jars, and vases, and lovely Chinese panels, and a Chinese ceiling, all which make us doubt whether the much-abused Pavilion was deserving of the sneers which have been lavished upon it—"the Prince's hideous house at Brighton," as Thackeray calls it. One little room, too, has a peculiar interest—it is the Waiting-room, where Ministers of State were wont to await their less public interviews with Majesty. Melbourne has sat here, Palmerston, and Russell, Robert Peel, Gladstone, no doubt. It is decorated in a not magnificent Italian style, with coloured panels, and is adorned with sets of miniatures of distinguished people of all times, as an encouragement, perhaps, to Prime Ministers to go and do likewise. There is the blotting book, with the Royal cypher, that great statesmen have idly scribbled in. Did any of them feel as nervous while awaiting the pleasure of their Royal mistress as other people feel as they wait in Ministers' ante-chambers? But it is long enough now since anybody waited there.

Strange to say, in our progress from end to end of the Palace, we have not met a single living soul; not a dog has barked, not a cat have we found sitting purring by the fire, not a bird has fluttered in its cage. Now and then a soft-toned clock chimes out hour or quarter from its case of porcelain or ormolu; fires are burning on marble hearths. Here has been a long silence, fitfully broken at times, but soon resuming its reign.

But if anybody has imagined, as might be imagined from the solitude in which it stands, that the Palace was in a half-dismantled, abandoned condition, let that person be undeceived. All is fresh, brilliant, well-cared-for; dust does not seem to settle, or it is expelled as soon as it appears; damp is vigorously warred against, although in the foggy, wintry days there is no keeping the all-penetrating haze out of the great halls and lofty

galleries. But that is an inconvenience inseparable from a London residence, and affects equally the occupier of a house of ten rooms as well as of a palace of a thousand.

And now our round is finished: we have seen everything that our very courteous and entertaining guide can show us, and it only remains to pass through the gloomy halls of Eblis beneath the buttresses and foundations, and so into the busy commonplace world that lies outside the gates of the Palace.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alasia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER XVII. A LETTER FROM CELIA.

EVERYONE expected more snow; but that night it did not come, and the next day was very much the same, with grey, thick clouds hanging low, and a creeping cold in the air which was not frost but winter in its saddest aspect and feeling.

Colonel Ward's sick room was, perhaps, the most cheerful place. He had slept at night, and all through the morning he was quite wide awake, and talked to Paul a great deal.

About twelve o'clock their talk was interrupted by Dr. Graves, and Paul left him with his patient. When the Doctor came downstairs the young Squire was walking about the garden in front, with a puzzled frown on his face.

Dick, jealous and unhappy at being shut out from his master, was lying on the doorstep; Jess was walking sedately after Paul; Panch and Judy were rolling over each other on the grass. When Dr. Graves came out these two rushed forward and jumped upon him. Dick looked at him fixedly with a low moan. Jess, as Paul stopped to speak to him, lay down and gazed into vacancy.

"Good dogs, good dogs—there, get along," said the Doctor. "Has Colonel Ward said anything to you about business, Mr. Romaine?"

"Business? Well, yes," said Paul, flushing a little as he looked at the Doctor, and wondered how much he knew. "He has been talking all the morning about his will. I wish he wouldn't."

"The sooner his mind is at rest the better."

"Why? You don't think him worse?"

"Not absolutely worse, no; but I am not easy about him. He had better see his lawyer, and get things settled. He is in a state of nervous excitement about this will of his. Do you understand? Not that he says much to me about it; but, if I were you, I should telegraph for Mr. Cole this afternoon."

"If he suggests it himself of course I must," said Paul. "But, you know, I must wait for that. From what he has been telling me I can't lift a finger to hurry things. I am awfully afraid he is going to do something wrong."

"Leave his money to you, do you mean?" said Dr. Graves, smiling.

"Part of it, and—look here, you know, he must have some relations somewhere, though he says he hasn't."

Dr. Graves was a thin, grey-haired, practical man, much weather-beaten, and not very cheerful, perhaps from his complete honesty. He was rather cynical in his views of humanity, but he liked Paul Romaine, and had liked his father, seeing in them a clear sincerity, which was the only quality he respected. Colonel Ward also shared his esteem for the same reason. As a rule, Dr. Graves hated women; he said he could not understand them.

"If I were you," said the Doctor, "I should safely trust the Colonel not to do anything unfair. He is a just man—honourable, like your father."

"Yes, but it's too much; if you only knew, Dr. Graves——"

"Don't tell me; I'm not curious, and I am in a great hurry. Colonel Ward is quite capable of managing his own affairs. For his sake, not for yours, I advise you to send that telegram."

The Doctor was gone. Paul loitered about with the dogs a few minutes longer, and then went back to the Colonel's room.

"Colonel," he said, sitting down beside him, "I've got something serious to say."

"Out with it; but I'm getting sleepy."

"If you really choose to do this for Celia, it is most awfully good of you. I don't see how we are ever to thank you—but——"

"Don't bother," said the Colonel, rather wearily. "Think of me sometimes when you think of your father, Paul. Poor Tom Darrell! I believe she was fond of him."

Paul felt all the more anxious at this strange, new gentleness. Lately, since he

had made friends with Celia, Colonel Ward had not mentioned her father at all. In old days nothing was too bad for him.

"I was going to say," said Paul, "why should you leave the rest to me! Now do think that over, will you? There can be no hurry."

"Yes, but there is," said the Colonel, more wakefully. "My memory's giving way. I wanted to tell you to telegraph to Cole at once. He will come down this afternoon, and the thing will be signed and done with. Then I shall be able to sleep quietly. Don't dispute. I can't stand it. Go away, there's a good fellow. Send the telegram, and take yourself off for the afternoon. Barty will look after me."

Barty's anxious face was already at the door, with something on a tray. Paul perceived that in truth the best and wisest thing was to take himself off, as the Colonel said. He went away to his own house; sent Ford off with the telegram to the lawyer; and after luncheon took his gun and went off into the woods with Dick and his own old retriever.

The fresh, keen air, and the sweet scent of the woods, cold and silent as they were, did Paul's spirits good. The dogs ran about and enjoyed themselves thoroughly, without showing much surprise at the conduct of their unpractical master, who let birds fly away from under his feet, and did not even pay them the attention of a random shot. Sometimes, when the humour took him, Paul could be rather a keen sportsman: his keeper respected him if his groom did not. But to-day he seemed to forget that he had a gun in his hand at all. He wandered on through intricate miles of wood, thinking how astonished Celia would be when she heard of the Colonel's intention. Of course Celia did not and could not care for money; but she cared very much for the things that money could bring. There would be hardly anything now which she could not have, if she chose. And then Paul thrust all these thoughts away with a sort of horror. After all, surely he had enough; and Celia, he knew, would agree with him in dreading the time when that legacy should come to her. People must of course make their wills; but a will was a ghastly thing at best; it had better be put aside and forgotten. Celia must know; he could not help telling her; but then the subject should never be mentioned again—not for years, he hoped—for it was very

hard to imagine what life would be without the faithful old friend who had been so much to him since his father died. And then Paul assured himself that the Colonel was better; that his good constitution would triumph, and he would live for years. If there was the slightest relapse, he determined to send for a London doctor to consult with Dr. Graves: anyhow, perhaps this would be a good thing to do; and busy with all these thoughts, he went tramping on through the oak-scrub and heather, while pheasants looked at him from branches of trees, and rabbits hardly took the trouble to hide in their holes, till Dick or the old black dog came scrambling through the underwood.

Paul took a long round, and, by the time he came back to Red Towers, the sun had set and twilight had fallen. It was almost dark in the thicker part of the woods. He came through the gate at the end of the garden and remembered a talk he had had with Celia standing in that very corner, before the trees were leafless and the garden flowerless, while the Virginia creeper, which covered part of the house, was still clustering thick and rich, in its beautiful brown and red, on the old red bricks. It was bare now; only the ivy remained, curling round corners and running up to the chimneys, with a deep-green mass below, where a whole congregation of birds would build their nests next spring. Mrs. Sabin had not yet shut the long range of windows, and the workmen's ladders and planks were lying about on the grass outside, where there was still a little snow.

There had been a peculiar sweetness about Celia that September day, the day after she arrived at Holm. She was good that day, as well as happy. Paul remembered how she had told him that she could be perfectly happy in the dear old house as it was, if he in the least disliked its being altered; as to the study, she would not have it touched for worlds.

Paul liked to remind himself of her words; she had said them, she had meant them, though, possibly, she might have forgotten them now. And, after that, she had talked to him very sweetly, with a deeper show of feeling than was usual with her, and then they had gone on into the yard together, and then Colonel Ward appeared and was conquered. Yes, she was the sweetest, dearest, best woman in the world; and the man to whom she had given herself had certainly no excuse for

any feeling but the most intense happiness. His life was going to be something beyond imagination; and in this bright future it now seemed impossible that the dear old Colonel would be absent. He and his dogs must come in at the gate as in old days. Paul and Celia, as they loitered about next summer in their garden full of roses, must surely see that little company advancing.

It was as if a sudden clash of joy-bells had broken in on Paul's melancholy mood; that wintry twilight garden might have been flooded with a miracle of sunshine. His eyes brightened, he pulled himself together, as the future gave him these dazzling glimpses of itself; he whistled to the dogs, and walked across the lawn with a light, quick step.

"Any sport, sir?" said Sabin, meeting him in the hall.

"No; I didn't try to hit anything," Paul said, laying his gun down. "Has there been any message from the Cottage this afternoon?"

"No, sir; but a gentleman's come down from London to see the Colonel, and I rather think he's there now. There's a letter for you, sir, on the study table."

Sabin smiled. He lingered a moment, looking after his young master as he went into the study. But then the door was shut, and there was no more to be seen.

It was a letter from Paris, from Celia. No wonder Paul had felt happy as he came near the house. So she had been writing to him yesterday when he was writing to her. She had not promised to write yesterday, but she had been better than her word; it was like Celia.

He threw himself into an arm-chair by the fire, and opened his letter. The first look that crossed his face and dimmed the smile away was one of complete bewilderment, for the letter had no beginning.

The beginning of Celia's letters was always "My dear Paul." He had remonstrated before now, and begged for something more; but she had laughed and said that she could not imagine anything more. As he did not seem satisfied she went on to explain, with laughing eyes:

"Mine—my dear! How can one say anything nicer than that? I despise 'dearest' and 'darling.' In fact, I think they are rather insulting, as if it was necessary to exaggerate. To me 'my dear' means infinitely more."

"So it does, when you say it like that,"

Paul was obliged to confess, and he never complained again.

But this letter from Paris had not even the plain beginning that Celia liked. There was something very mysterious about it altogether. Every word of it seemed more puzzling than the last, and, as Paul read on, and read to the end, his bewilderment became hopeless.

The letter was not dated, and this was the way it began:

"—I have put off writing to you, and you are calling me horrid and heartless; but who was it, I wonder, who kindly told me once that I was as cold as a fish, and as hard as a stone? And how can you expect anything from a person with such a character? At first, I thought I would not write to you at all, for it was stupid of you, as well as wrong, to write that letter to me; but I suppose silence is a worse punishment than you deserve, and there are other reasons. By the time you get this I hope I shall be married, or, at any rate, it will be too late for you to interfere. I told you before, and I tell you again, that I like my prospects very much. A fish is satisfied with plenty of water to swim in, and a stone has not the bother of being in love. A stone is lazy, too, I should think, and would not care to dig itself up and tear about the world for anybody. Don't you begin to see now what nonsense your letter was? I know, don't I, when I am well off? At the same time, hoping that we may never meet again, at least, till you have forgotten to be silly, and have married some more self-denying girl, I will confess that if I could be in love, it would be with you, and not with him. I don't mind telling you that, because you think you know it already, and I suppose you are not far wrong. My marriage, of course, has no love in it, but it is a very good thing for me. I like to be rich, I like to be comfortable, and I like to be spoilt. There is nothing good in me. Your wife, when you have been married to her a year or two, will have to be a very good woman indeed. The man I am going to marry will always worship me, and will not expect much in return. At the same time, if I were a braver woman, I suppose I might possibly throw him over, and marry you. But as things are, my dearest, no. Don't write to me again; it is too late, and we have done with each other for ever now. Yours always, CELIA."

Paul read this letter twice through, first quickly, then slowly, without the faintest

idea that it was meant for any one but him. Then he took up the envelope and looked at it vaguely: "Paul Romaine, Esq., Red Towers," and so on; that was all right: and he began to read the letter again. As he became more fully conscious that he did not understand a single word of it, there came over him a feeling of terrible oppression, a feeling of being stifled in a black fog; and then the thought flashed upon him that he was going out of his mind. He laid the letter down, got up from his chair and walked round the room two or three times; then he took down a book from the shelves. "If I am mad," he thought, "I shall not understand this." He stood still, and forced himself to read half a page, giving it his full attention; it was perfectly clear to him; and long afterwards, when that terrible evening had been left years behind, he remembered the book—it was Matthew Arnold's "Essays in Criticism,"—and could almost have said that half-page by heart. Then he went back to Celia's letter, and began to read it a fourth time, with a clear and resolute intention to understand every word of it, and to know the worst; for he still supposed that the letter was meant for him.

Understand it! But that was not so easy, with the strongest resolution and the clearest brain, for it was as full of mysteries as ever. Some great trouble was evidently wrapped up in it; but why, whatever she had done or meant to do, should Celia have put things in such an extraordinary way?

She had not put off writing to him; nothing had been farther from his thoughts than to call her "horrid and heartless." As to those strange remarks about stones and fishes, he fancied he had heard her say something of the kind before; but could not very well remember what. His letter! Was that yesterday's letter? But she had not received it. And what in the world did she mean about her marriage, and about this other man, with whom she was not in love?

"Did I ever want her to be self-denying?" thought poor Paul. "And who could possibly worship her more than I do?"

Too late! Not write to her again! Done with each other for ever! The mystery was indeed too deep to be understood. And then to sign herself "Yours always," and to call him "my dearest," when she was bringing everything to an end in this overwhelming way! To be sure she had drawn her pen through that

"My dearest," lightly, as if by a casual after-thought of her own inconsistency; but still she had written it, and had left it there. Though she did not say so plainly, the whole letter seemed to imply that she was going to be married immediately to someone else; so immediately that Paul's writing to her would be of no use. And yet she seemed miserable, and she said plainly that she liked him best.

"I must go," said Paul. "The Colonel is certainly better. Can't I catch the night mail at Charing Cross? Anyhow, I'll try for it. Cole will surely be ready to go back by the 5.50, and Ford can drive us down in half-an-hour."

To Ford's great satisfaction he had been employed that autumn to buy a fast-trotting cob for the little dog-cart, and this animal did his twelve miles an hour easily.

Paul rang the bell, and Sabin appeared at the door that same moment with a message.

"Would you kindly step over to the Cottage, sir? Colonel Ward would be glad to see you. Did you ring, sir?" as Paul stared at him rather blankly.

"Tell Mrs. Sabin to pack my bag, will you? I may have to go away to-night. Tell Ford to have the cart ready. I shall want to catch the 5.50."

Having given his orders, the Squire went out, walking with long, hurried steps to the Cottage. Just outside the door he tumbled over Dick, who was waiting for him, and kicked him severely. The poor dog was too brave to cry out, but looked up for the kind words which ought to have followed. Paul strode on, however, without taking any notice of him, and Dick slunk after him disconsolate.

Sabin went back to his wife and feared that the master had had bad news from Paris.

"He was as jolly as you please when he first came in," said he; "but now his face is as white and his eyes like burning coals, so as you never saw the like. I hope his young lady ain't a quarrelling with him."

"And going off to-night! That do look serious," Mrs. Sabin agreed. "I shouldn't have believed he'd have left the Colonel, and him with one foot in the grave, as you may say."

"Well, it's a sing'lar thing," said Sabin.

Paul, meanwhile, with his letter in his pocket, arrived at the Cottage, and went upstairs to the Colonel's room. Dr. Graves met him in the passage and stopped him for a moment.

"You here again!" said Paul.

"I was passing on my way back, and thought I would look in," said the Doctor. "He is not quite so well—rather too much excited. I shall be glad when this will business is over and done with."

"Why the devil couldn't it have been left alone altogether?" said Paul, looking on the ground.

Dr. Graves glanced at him sharply.

"Well, he wants you," he said. "I shall wait downstairs for the present. I have got to witness the will, it seems, and I want to see him again afterwards."

The Doctor passed on. Paul stood still a moment outside the door, trying to collect his thoughts, and to feel like himself again. The sight of his dear old Colonel was more calming than anything else could have been.

He was lying propped up with pillows; his face was flushed, and looked drawn and weary; his voice sounded weak and strained. The room was full of bright fire and lamp-light; on the further side of the bed Mr. Cole, the lawyer—a very solemn and business-like personage—was writing at a table. Paul walked round and shook hands with him.

"Mr. Cole has raised a question, Paul, that you must answer," said Colonel Ward. "He asked me whether the legacy to Miss Celia Darrell was to be conditional on her marriage with you. After a moment's consideration I thought it was best to consult you."

The Colonel smiled as he looked at Paul. Mr. Cole also fixed his eyes on the young man, standing at the foot of the bed, with the slightest quiver of amusement about his grave mouth. To Paul only the question did not seem any matter of amusement. He stood there looking down; and if the Colonel's eyes had had their old brightness, the shadow that had fallen upon Paul would certainly not have escaped them. His look was dark and gloomy; he lifted his hand to his face as if to hide something, and stood slouching there, leaning the other hand on the bed-post.

"Conditional on her marriage with me?" he repeated, and he seemed to speak with a slight effort. "I don't quite understand."

"Yes, you do, my boy," said the Colonel impatiently. "You might die, or she might change her mind—I'm talking nonsense, of course. Now, I should wish her to have seventy thousand in any case; I only want to know if you agree with me. It is only a formality; it doesn't imply any doubt of your marriage coming off, you understand, Paul."

"Whether our marriage comes off or not it can make no difference, surely," said Paul; and Mr. Cole stared at him still more curiously than before.

Perhaps it crossed his mind that Miss Darrell, with seventy thousand pounds, might easily find a more cheerful mate than this dark-looking fellow.

"That is just what I think," said Colonel Ward. "Now go away, and we will finish this business. Ask the Doctor if he can wait half-an-hour."

Paul hesitated a moment; but he could say nothing about the 5.50 train, though it seemed to him as if the minutes were tearing on. Perhaps he might have to start off without telling the Colonel, or seeing him again. Was that possible?

Before joining Dr. Graves in the drawing-room he took out Celia's letter, and read it once more under the lamp in the hall. Any chance of understanding it seemed more remote than ever. He could recognise neither her nor himself; and that other man, "the man I am going to marry," was like some black spectre of an unknown creation.

He went into the drawing-room, and, for the next half hour tried to talk politics to Dr. Graves, who put down his abstraction to the account of Colonel Ward's will, and thought he was a very queer fellow.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XIX. ENGAGED.

"WELL, have you written it?" asked Fred of Gower, as coolly and casually as though the letter were an invitation. His spirits had so recovered themselves that the danger he had passed through looked now long behind him, and dwarfed to nothing in the distance. But Gower, who was in the agonies of penitential composition, naturally did not see things in this light.

"No, I haven't," he answered doggedly.

Fred, sobered and alarmed by his tone, said apologetically:

"I've been so relieved that I can't help being in good spirits. To tell you the truth, old man, I wasn't sure of May."

"Have you seen her?" asked Gower eagerly.

"Of course I've seen her. I was quite as anxious about it as yourself."

"And what did she say?"

"She thinks there never was anything so splendid as what you're doing for me—or rather for her—and she's just as grateful as ever she can be."

"Oh, grateful, eh?"

"Well, you couldn't expect her to fall in love with you only for that; and if she were hit already she certainly wouldn't tell me so. But I shouldn't be in such spirits, I can tell you, if I didn't think your chances excellent."

"Did she—do you think I might speak at once?"

"It would look a little like sending in your bill, wouldn't it?" Fred ventured to say in his resentment at what he supposed to be the bargain Gower was striking—no

letter unless immediate payment was made for it. In truth, Gower suspected Fred of equivocation; of suggesting that May's acceptance of him was almost certain—while he knew it to be exceedingly doubtful—in order to ensure the writing and posting of the fateful letter to his father.

"I can't set my mind to anything," he said, glancing significantly at the half-written letter. "I can't set my mind to anything while in this suspense."

"All right," rejoined Fred huffily, "she will accept you, I have no doubt, now, as a debt; while, if you had the patience to wait a week, she would have taken you for yourself."

"Do you mean she doesn't care at all for me for myself?"

"I mean just this: she's got her head full of all sorts of romantic notions, and she's fitting them all on to you now for what you're doing for her; but if you propose for her at once, it will look like a demand for payment, won't it?"

"But she knows what my feelings are, that I mean to ask her?"

"There are her feelings to consider, and the best way to work on them. If you hold off for a day or two, as if you feared reminding her of an obligation, she'd think you no end of a hero."

"But I can't; I can't go on like this," Gower answered doggedly.

"Oh, well; ask her at once if you like. It's only a question of taste."

"I don't see what taste has got to do with it—if she knows I'm going to ask her, any way."

"Only that I made you out so disinterested and magnanimous, and all that sort of thing, and it's a pity to spoil the picture. Of course, if she'd accept you next week, she'll accept you this; but it

would be more for yourself next week, and more for my sake this week."

"Did she say— Do you think she'll accept me?"

"I don't see how she can help herself," Fred cried impatiently.

"You mean she'll accept me only because of this?" Gower asked, pointing with the pen to his half-written letter.

"I don't mean anything of the sort. That has this much to do with it—it makes her think you a hero, and she'd never accept any man whom she didn't imagine to be a hero of some kind. But she doesn't think of it at all as a transaction or a bargain, and she would recoil from it if she did. That's my only reason for wishing you to give her a little line—to let her feel herself free."

"It's not likely I should put it to her as a bargain," Gower answered, sullenly.

"Very well; very well. I'm not going over it all again. Ask her to-day—this morning—and then you'll know where you are, and can write that letter or not, according to her answer." So saying, Fred turned coolly on his heel and quitted the room. "It's only a game of Brag," thought Gower, "and I shall certainly not ruin myself with my father for nothing."

Having made this resolve, he shut up his desk and went down to watch and await his chance of seeing May.

It was some time before May came downstairs—ready dressed to go out. Gower, hearing her say something to her mother while descending the stairs, hurried forth to intercept her, and, upon seeing her dressed to go out, had the presence of mind to cross the hall for his hat—as if he, too, were going out, quite independently of her.

"Were you going out?" he asked, in a surprised tone.

"Yes; I have to go to the schools."

"Perhaps you would allow me to accompany you—part of the way, I mean," he stammered diffidently.

"But I'm only going to the schools."

"I wanted to go to—to the Post Office."

There was nothing for it but to allow him to accompany her, and they set forth together in an embarrassed silence. Presently the Post Office inspiration suggested another not less brilliant idea to him.

"I was thinking of telegraphing as well as writing home about this—this cheque. You see, my father is so furious about it, that he will talk of it all over the place, even if he doesn't put it to-day into the

lawyer's hands; and the sooner I stop him the better."

"It is so good of you," murmured May, ashamed of the bathos of the acknowledgement.

"I couldn't let it go on, you know. How could I, knowing what it would mean to you?"

"It would have been terrible to us all," May said helplessly.

"I was thinking only of you. I can think of nothing else. You're not offended?" he cried forlornly, as May looked agitated and distressed.

"Offended? No; I'm not offended. Of course I'm not offended; but I—I don't deserve your goodness," May stammered awkwardly.

"It's not goodness; I can't help myself; and I can't help speaking now when I know I oughtn't—when it looks like asking payment."

Here there was a pause of ludicrous embarrassment, for a couple of tramps were now in the act of passing them. The male tramp began his mechanical whine as monotonously and inattentively to the sing-song formula he repeated as though he were intoning in church.

Gower flung him a copper or two with the emphasis of a curse and quickened the pace to get out of earshot.

Meanwhile, May used her respite to consider her answer. Now that it came to the point, her acceptance of Mr. Gower did not seem to her so much a question of self-sacrifice for Fred's sake, as a question of absolute right or wrong. Would anything make it right for her to accept a man she did not love—right in her, or right to him? Of course, at the back of this question was the natural shrinking of such a girl from the desecration of her hands or lips by a man she did not care for. In the distance these incidents of an engagement were hardly seen, but when the engagement was upon her, they hid all else.

But the grotesque interruption of the tramps had given Gower pause also.

"Look here, Miss Beresford, it's a shame to keep dunning you like this. I ought to give you up and go away, but I can't—I can't," he cried lamentably.

May, being unprepared for this piteous apology, had nothing ready in answer to it.

"It's not that I haven't anywhere to go now, you know," Gower, encouraged by her silence, continued craftily. "I cannot go home, of course; but I might go to

Canada to an uncle of mine. I must go there, or somewhere abroad, if there's no hope for me," he added desolately.

May was beginning to feel herself a perfect monster of ingratitude, and to regard Gower more and more as chivalry itself.

"Do you think your father will never forgive this?" she asked.

"Oh, I don't care. I don't in the least care about my father, or about anything. I can think only of you, and, if I had only the very least hope of you, I should not mind this at all; I shouldn't, indeed."

This appeal was too boyish to seem meant as a reminder of the amount of May's obligation, which was thus pleaded to her with all the force of ingenuousness.

"We've known each other such a short time," she urged in her distressful embarrassment, yet conscious of the feebleness and folly of her words in the moment of uttering them.

"But I don't expect you to care for me as I care for you. How could I?" he cried eagerly. "Only let me hope, will you? Only say that I may hope; say that I need not go away," he urged again and again in so boyish, or rather childish, a way; so beseechingly, and at the same time so respectfully, that she almost forgot her fears of him as a lover in her thoughts of him as the most simple and single-minded of men. What could she say? She could say only that she did not care for him as he desired; to be told only again and again that, of course he did not expect this yet. Thus May, by her indecision, committed herself decidedly, and found herself engaged irretrievably five minutes after her shrinking repulsion from the mere thought of an engagement. Gower, rather through timidity than tact, had in his appeal kept the ardent lover in the background altogether, while suggesting quite moving pictures of his misery, of his magnanimity, and of his devotion to May.

But even if Gower had fluttered and frightened his confused prey by a nearer approach, she could not have had the courage to break out of the net. Fred, and the frightful death from which she thought she had saved him, and the hardly less horrible consequence to her father and mother, came rushing back to her mind in overwhelming force at Gower's casual mention of Fred's name, and made her acceptance of him seem to her nothing less than inevitable.

For the short remainder of their walk together, what her engagement was to

others—to her brother, father, mother, and to Gower himself—filled her mind, to the momentary exclusion of what it was to herself.

Gower consulted her as to the wording of the telegram he was about to send his father. It was certainly not considerate of him, but she put it down to his boyishness.

She left him at the Post Office, upon the plea of urgent school business, and with the promise to return, as soon as she could, to the Vicarage.

"I cannot tell you how happy you've made me!" he cried with his whole heart as they parted, and she, blushing scarlet, muttered some inaudible reply.

Before May returned to the Vicarage Gower had cut off all possibility of retreat for her, by announcing her acceptance of him, first to her father, and then to her mother.

"She has accepted you!" cried the Vicar, when Gower had sought him in the study to ask his consent to the engagement.

"She has accepted you!" in a tone of such amazement as was by no means complimentary to the happy man.

"Yes," Gower stammered, greatly disappointed. "I hope you don't disapprove, sir!"

"No; not disapprove if she—if she—I mean I had no idea of this."

"And I hadn't, sir; at least, I hadn't much hope, and I can hardly yet believe it."

"There could be no misunderstanding—I mean I thought she would come herself to tell me of it," the Vicar cried in his bewilderment.

"She is at the schools," Gower replied, as though this were an adequate explanation.

That May should accept a man incidentally, on her way to the schools, and that man Mr. Gower, seemed to the Vicar the most incredible thing conceivable. There must be some mistake.

"Mr. Gower, there's some mistake; you'll forgive my suggesting it, but there's some mistake, I'm sure. You have misunderstood her in some way."

"There is no mistake, as you will hear from herself when she returns; but I hope it does not seem a mistake to you, sir."

"I think her the best judge of her own happiness," replied the Vicar evasively.

"And I may hope that you will not disapprove of it if you find it to be true, sir?" Gower asked in a slightly nettled tone.

"Certainly. I was not hesitating over my approval, but over hers, Mr. Gower. She has known you for so short a time, and is generally so slow to make new friends that I can hardly realise what you tell me—I can hardly realise it," he repeated.

Gower, naturally much embarrassed by this reception of his happy news, muttered some inarticulate reply and escaped from the room.

Then her father seized his hat and hurried to the schools. Knowing May's opinion of Gower, and her utter weariness of him after a single week's companionship, he could not possibly believe that she had accepted him as her companion for life. Yet, Gower was so absolutely assured of her acceptance of him! What was the meaning of it? If she had accepted him, it was certainly not for love, and most assuredly not for position and fortune. For what, then? No; it was utterly and preposterously impossible that she could have accepted him.

Thinking the matter over and over, and growing more assured of this impossibility at every step, he had nearly reached the schools when May met him.

"May, dear," he began breathlessly at the moment of their meeting. "May, dear, Mr. Gower has got it into his head—Has he been speaking to you at all about it—I mean, proposing for you?"

"Yes, father," she answered.

"He thinks you have accepted him."

"I have, father."

"You have! But——" Here the Vicar paused, almost stunned by his bewilderment.

They walked on together in silence, neither daring to look into the other's face.

At last her father said hesitatively: "You are quite sure of your own mind, dear?"

"Yes, father."

But her tremulous tone convinced him that she was neither assured nor happy in her mind.

"It's your own wish altogether—not your mother's?"

"No; she has never said anything to me about it."

"Well, dear, you know best. I had no idea that you cared at all for him."

Dead silence on May's part. She could not make the faintest protest of caring for him, whatever depended upon it.

After all, thought her father, so inscrutable are the ways of women and the

workings of their minds, she may have had a sort of revulsion of feeling in his favour since she used to laugh at him. Perhaps, her very ridicule of him was itself ominous of an immediate change of mood and mind.

Her ridicule was certainly sincere at the time; but her vane had veered round since, and now the remembrance of her former Beatrice-like mocking kept her silent, ashamed, and embarrassed.

Thus the Vicar reasoned naturally and almost inevitably upon the only evidence before him.

"He is simple, manly, and good-hearted, and, if devotion to you can make you happy, your happiness is assured," he said presently.

"He is very generous. I cannot tell you how generous he is," May was able to say in reply; and the emphasis of her tone convinced her father that she had turned completely round as he suspected, and the whirligig of time had brought Gower full revenge for her ridicule.

As they neared the Vicarage, he said:

"You had better tell your mother of it at once, dear; it will give her great pleasure. She thinks a feather in a man's hat makes him taller," alluding to the title to which Gower was heir. When they had got into the hall he kissed her with great emotion, and, saying, "God bless you," he hurried into the study. There he had some miserable moments. May was in a sense lost to him; at least he could now never be to her what he had been, nor she to him. Another had taken his place, and that other this foolish boy! For the first time in her life, and in the most serious matter of her life, May had disappointed him.

Meanwhile May, in her own room, was as miserably conscious of her father's disappointment in her as though he had expressed it to her. It needed only this to fill to overflowing her cup of mortification. In accepting Mr. Gower, she had forfeited her self-respect and her father's respect—both as dear to her as they could be to any other girl in the world. It was the reverse of a consolation to her to find that she had thereby won the respect of her mother; for it was given to her on grounds so low that May had to stoop to perceive them. Indeed, her mother's congratulations were based on such sordid considerations that they only deepened May's sense of the loss of her own and of her father's respect.

When she had at last mustered spirit

for the confidence, she sought out her mother, who received her with much effusion.

"I am glad, my dear, that you have at last remembered my existence," she said, with a playful affectation of offence. "I thought you must have forgotten it when Mr. Gower came to tell me that you had accepted him."

"He has told you!" cried May, with some impatience in her tone.

"Some one had to tell me, I suppose," rejoined her mother still playfully, for she could forgive May much in consideration of her conquest.

"I came to tell you about it," May answered almost absently, certainly not as though speaking from an overfull heart.

But this listlessness her mother took for fine-lady affectation. She imagined that the engagement must have seemed as brilliant promotion to May as it did to herself, and that this apparent apathy was a languid assumption, in reproof of her own undignified exultation. Yet she took the supposed rebuke meekly, having suddenly conceived an extraordinary respect for May.

"You have made me very happy, dear," she said, kissing her, with unwonted tenderness in her tone and in the caress. "He is all that I could have wished for."

Here the ideal youth himself, who had been seeking May everywhere, entered.

"I've just been telling May how happy your engagement has made me," Mrs. Beresford said, turning to him with beaming face.

"It has made me very happy," Gower answered, with a wistful look at May.

"I think engagements are 'smittle,' as they call it here, that is, infectious. It was not so very long since May had to congratulate her cousin, the Honourable Miss Beresford-Fox, on her engagement, and, indeed, she was asked by her aunt, Lady Riverside, to be one of the eight bridesmaids on the occasion, but she was so afraid of feeling small among all her great relations that she declined."

"Pity she didn't go," replied Gower, overflowing to facetiousness with high spirits. "It would have been a sort of dress rehearsal, you know."

"Oh, it was a very grand affair, I assure you, Mr. Gower; the Marquis of Abbeyford would have been present if he hadn't been in India"—an extraordinary accident which the discomfited Gower deplored as "very unfortunate," so making good his retreat.

Presently it leaked out that the Honourable Miss Beresford-Fox's wedding, which was thus cited as an amazing coincidence, had taken place more than two years since; so that even Gower perceived that it was dragged in, head and shoulders, to suggest to him that May's family was even more august than his own.

Fred's flippant reception of the news hardly made up to May for all the mortification of her father's and her mother's "congratulations."

"Hang it, May! You needn't make such a wry face over it; one of the best fellows, and the best matches in England!"

A NIGHT'S LODGING.

WE are waiting, on a wintry afternoon, on the platform of a great railway terminus, and are watching a heavily-freighted train discharge its passengers. There is the bustle of arrival, the scramble for baggage, lightly encumbered passengers secure the first cabs, and hurry away.

There is the florid young squire, the country lawyer with his black bag full of deeds, the eager undergraduate with his head full of the delights of a few days' freedom in town, and many others whom pleasure or business draws to London for awhile, but all requiring, in one form or another, a night's lodging.

For most of these there is no difficulty at all; the lawyer has his own snug quarters where he knows the sheets are well aired, and the wines good: for others big hotels are waiting.

Fiddlers and pipers are tuning up, and glittering halls of delight are about to open. But, when all these have departed, you may still see young Giles with his bundle, or middle-aged Brown with his wife, and a baby wrapped up in an old red shawl—and these trudge along wearily enough over the asphalt—lights already turned down and the station quiescent—towards the bewildering glare and turmoil of the streets.

And if we could hover above the great city, endowed with a preternatural clearness of vision, we should see approaching the dim, blurred circle of the lights of London, wayfarers from every direction, who are hoping to find some kind of shelter beneath the myriad roofs that lie darkly under the cloudy canopy of night.

A night's lodging! No farther outlook than this. Homeless, landless, houseless

they may be, yet, with enough to pay for a night's lodging, not altogether hopeless.

By those in search of a night's lodging, the first policeman met with may be consulted with advantage. There are plenty of "common lodging-houses" all over London, and, being necessarily licensed and inspected by the police, the members of the force are generally well instructed as to their locality.

Coming from the west, the wayfarer will find a nest of them before he reaches Notting Hill, and further on there are plenty about St. Giles's and Drury Lane. The Pentonville Road can boast its lodging-houses of a rather superior stamp, and they are to be found, too, about the great Cattle Market, and in the vicinity of the Great North Road. Hoxton, Whitechapel, and Limehouse furnish their contingents, and, crossing the water, there are plenty to be found at Deptford, and in the vast labyrinth of streets that pivot upon the Elephant and Castle as a centre.

Among these common lodging-houses, there is as wide a diversity in the way of accommodation and treatment, as between the palatial hotel and the humble coffee-house.

The smallest sum for which a night's lodging can be obtained is twopence, but the houses are few where such a humble tariff prevails, and even the humblest crossing-sweeper might turn up his nose at them. The threepenny houses are not particularly select, and fourpence is the more general charge—the lowest, perhaps, at which the full advantages of a night's lodging can be obtained, including a common room or kitchen, with fire for cooking, and a good supply of hot water.

At sixpence a night we may hope for a superior class of lodging-house—in a general way for single men only—for the mixed lodging-houses are generally the worst of their class; and as for lodging-houses "for ladies only," they are few and far between, if not totally unknown.

There is a still higher class of common lodging-house, where ninepence and a shilling are charged for a night's lodging, with sometimes a sixpenny class as well; and these are often frequented by a class of regular customers, many of whom neither possess nor desire any other home. But whether the customer be regular, or otherwise, the lodging-house rule is inexorable; no pay, no bed. A man may have slept in the same house, and in the same bed for three hundred sixty-four nights of the

year. On the three hundred and sixty-fifth, if the requisite coin be not forthcoming, out he must go. But for those possessed of capital enough to pay in advance, the lodging-house is considerate enough. "Five nights in advance, pays for a week." Such is the unwritten law of lodging-houses all over London.

A friend who has had considerable experience in this mode of life, informs us that according to his experience of lodging-houses, there is not much difference in the beds supplied at the various tariffs. The extra money goes in comparative or even absolute privacy. For instance, with a sixpenny bed there are from twelve to twenty inmates in a room. And as all the ills that flesh is heir to find refuge in a lodging-house, including bronchitis, asthma, racking coughs, and other complaints troublesome not only to the sufferers, but also to their companions, and as the few who are sound sleepers are generally sonorous snorers, it may be imagined that a susceptible nature finds it difficult to obtain perfect repose. But for ninepence the lodger gets, perhaps, only a couple of room-mates, and for a shilling he has a room for himself.

Most of those who resort to the common lodging-house are driven thereto by stress of circumstances. The average lodger is a man whose world possessions are covered by the hat he wears, which last is pretty sure to be in a shady condition. The man with a good hat keeps out of the common lodging-house—he has still a position in the world, or if he has lost it, is not without hopes of recovering it. The lodger, as a rule, has lost everything. He may have had a home, a comfortable home perhaps, a pleasing wife, and loving children. The home was broken up; the wife is dead; the children in the workhouse—there they may stay for him; his misfortunes have deteriorated him. The parish officers are looking for him, but it is not difficult to evade them. In many cases drink has worked the ruin; but we may find those who have never given way to any excess, and yet have fallen thus low; nothing is easier than to fall; the chasm is ever yawning for its victims, and how few are they who struggle once more to the surface!

And yet the aspect of the kitchen of a decent lodging-house is anything rather than lugubrious. Here is an interior which is undeniably bright and pleasant on a cold winter's evening. An enormous kitchen, at either end of which blazes a magnificent

fire. Lodgers are coming in, they have paid their shot, and are sure of warmth and comfort for another night. The deal tables are well scrubbed and clean, the gas jets flare cheerily, and men gathered about the fire places are busily cooking the provisions they have brought with them. Potatoes are being boiled, sausages are frying, and chops and steaks are broiling on the long grid that stretches from end to end of the fireplace.

That red-faced man who occupies the post of honour on the bench nearest the fire, and who smokes his pipe while he exchanges airy badinage with the people cooking their victuals, is an old habitué of the house, and was once a surgeon in the army. The old hands call him "doctor," and treat him with considerable respect, and he can generally hold his own with new comers, who are disposed to slight his presidential authority. Only the "parson" ventures to engage him in a serious battle of words—a tall, thin man, in a long, black coat, who is frying sausages over the fire. The parson, according to general report, has a rich wife, and a fine house somewhere down in the country; but he prefers the freedom and license of a lodging-house to the gilded chains of home; and it may be said that whenever he opens his mouth he brings the conversation down to a still lower depth than before.

Still, apart from such accidental pre-eminence, a spirit of equality reigns; and as the crowd of lodgers thickens, individual characteristics are lost in the general bustle and movement. There are lockers all round the kitchen, where the regular lodgers leave their little table requisites—a plate or two, a knife and fork, and, if happy enough to possess one, a teapot. But there is a friendly give-and-take among the lodgers generally—the take perhaps more freely developed than the give.

But Sunday is perhaps the time to see the lodging-house in full swing, as the bells are ringing for church, and well-dressed people are thronging the streets on their way to their various temples. The proportion who attend church, or any other place of worship, from the lodging-house, would require for its statement a decimal point and a very long row of noughts, before any substantial figure was reached. But the lodger celebrates the day after his own fashion. He lies in bed as long as he can—the deputy is generally polite enough to call him up, and insists upon his obeying the call about ten a.m.—and from that

time till noon the lodger occupies himself in cooking what may be termed either a late breakfast or an early dinner, and in washing his shirt. It is rarely that the lodger has more than one, and while that one is hanging up to dry, he lounges about in the airiest of costumes smoking his pipe, and giving a finishing touch to the fry or the broil. By noon, or thereabouts, our lodger's shirt is dry, and he puts it on, and bringing out any little adornment he may possess in the way of scarf or necktie, he dresses, and with some fellow-lodger turns out jauntily into the street. This is the time when the streets are most thickly crowded with pedestrians; and the comparative absence of wheeled traffic makes the scene all the more remarkable. Lodging-houses, model dwellings, rows of workmen's cottages empty themselves into the streets, and the crowd, mingling with the various streams of people from church or chapel, fill up the broad causeways of the main thoroughfares. As one o'clock strikes the crowd suddenly becomes thinner—the public-houses have opened, and the promenade ends with a visit to the "pump room," that glittering and friendly bar, the attractions of which have helped to land our friends in the common lodging-house.

Here and there, among the inmates of the lodging-house, may be found some workman earning a full wage, and yet preferring the life and bustle of a lodging-house to the loneliness of mere lodgings. But such a case is rare. The majority of the lodgers live from hand to mouth, and know no more than the sparrows where they shall find their next meal, or roost at night. Good fortune means a meal and a bed; evil fortune, a night in the streets. There is a notable diminution, however, in the number of the criminal classes who resort to lodging-houses—one of those "gratifying facts" which only require a little explanation to turn out not so gratifying after all. The fact is, the common lodging-house is becoming too respectable for the common thief, and the constant police-supervision, to which these establishments are subject, is very irksome to the predatory classes. These greatly prefer the privacy and retirement of private lodgings. In the low tenement houses which abound in evil neighbourhoods, there is no limit to the overcrowding and general disorder of the place, as long as the lodgers are taken for a longer term than a "night's lodging."

The floating population in the common

lodging-houses of London has been fairly estimated at some twenty-seven thousand souls. Taking a recent report of the chief of the metropolitan police, we find that, in the year 1885, there were just a thousand and fifty-three of these common lodging-houses licensed and registered within the police boundaries. And these houses had beds for thirty-one thousand and ten lodgers. Allowing for empty beds, etc., the above estimate of the lodging-house population is pretty well justified. But it is a fact which might well give rise to some rather dismal reflections; there are twenty-seven thousand persons, the population of a substantial town that might well support its banks, institutions, local press, with a representative in Parliament, a mayor, aldermen, and all the rest; and the great majority of this population is utterly homeless, without a morsel of personal property, except the clothes they stand up in, without any assurance of another meal, or of any shelter for the coming night.

One "encouraging fact," which again proves less and less encouraging the more it is analysed, is the return of deaths in common lodging-houses. Out of the twenty-seven thousand estimated lodgers, there were only fifty-one deaths in the particular year to which our statistics refer. Now, as the ordinary death-rate of London is about twenty per thousand, and that of the lodging-houses not quite two per thousand, it would seem that the common lodging-house must be the most perfect sanatorium imaginable, and that those who desire health and long life have only to give up their lordly residences in Tyburnia and Belgravia, and take a casual night's lodging at the sixpenny "kip."

It is only fair to say that the common lodging-house is not an unhealthy abode. It is surveyed and measured, and a minimum of three hundred cubic feet of space is insisted upon in the sleeping rooms for each lodger. Periodical limewashing and general cleansing, too, are imperative, so that altogether the poor wretch who has no other home than the lodging-house, sleeps better, when he has the requisite coin in hand, than the majority of the poor with rooms and beds to call their own.

But when it comes to dying, the poor lodger must be very much alive to get a chance of dying in his lodging-house; he must go off very suddenly that is, for if there is time to remove him to the parish infirmary, there it is that he will draw his

last breath. And it is only what we might expect, to find that the fifty-one sudden deaths that occurred in the London lodging-houses are assigned to two causes chiefly, privation and drink. Last stage of all is a shelf on the parish mortuary, and a pauper funeral—well, hardly that; for the wasted form that once had home and friends perhaps, and was the object of a mother's loving care, is passed on to the hospital dissecting room, and does not find even a grave to itself.

So far we have spoken chiefly of lodging-houses for males, and perhaps the term mixed lodging-houses used above may lead to misapprehension. Some lodging-houses offer accommodation to married couples, and women as well as men. These still retain the feature of the common kitchen, where men, women, and children mingle in social intercourse. These houses are well conducted in a general way; but the moral tone of such assemblages is, too often, terribly low and degraded. Here is the last step in the downward career, a social Inferno below which it would be difficult to find any lower depth.

HELÈNE MASSALSKA.

THE state of Poland, up to the partition, was feudalism run mad. In every other European country—Russia was more than half Asiatic—the feudal system had been more or less shaped to modern notions, in anticipation of the still greater change which the French Revolution was to bring about.

Private wars had long ceased in England. No one was allowed to keep armed retainers after Henry the Seventh came to the throne. The school histories tell us how Lord Oxford, entertaining the wily Tudor, joyously showed him seven hundred men all wearing his badge. He expected praise for having such a fine little regiment ready in case of accidents; but he was sadly disappointed.

"Who are these?" coldly asked the ungrateful King.

"My men, at your Majesty's service."

"Say you so? My attorney must speak with you." And the poor man was mulcted in a crushing fine by a monarch whose fixed idea was to make civil war impossible.

But in Poland, even in the eighteenth century, private war was a thing of every day. To the Diets—especially when a King was to be elected—the rival families (clans a

Scot would call them) brought up their followers, just as at a contested Irish election a landlord would bring up the hordes of voters who were bred for the purpose on his estate before the forty-shilling freehold vote was abolished. The Radziwills kept up twenty thousand men; the Potockis, Counts Palatine, twenty-five thousand; the Massalski legion numbered sixteen thousand. Under such a system the King, even had he been hereditary instead of elective, could have been little more than a cipher; while against an outside enemy—especially an enemy like Russia—such a nation was as a rope of sand.

Russia played in Poland the game she has since so often played in the East: she posed as upholder of the rights of Dissenters. By the treaty of 1768 she insisted on all Polish subjects—whether Greek Church, Lutheran, or Calvinist—being admitted to the same privileges as the Catholics.

"This is simple justice," said they to the poor weak King Stanislaus Augustus; "and to save you the worry of enforcing it, we will hold the fortresses of your kingdom till it is thoroughly carried out."

Before the King had time to think, Russian troops had occupied all his strong places and began domineering over the country. This was too much; the Poles threw aside their differences: Radziwills, Massalskis, and Oginskis proclaimed the Confederation of Bar, and took the field—at first with great success; but, thanks to Russian gold, they were broken up and defeated in detail, and the leaders, losing heart, fled. Prince Radziwill went to Munich, where he lived and supported quite a host of Polish exiles on "the Twelve Apostles": twelve statues of solid gold, each eighteen inches high, which, fearing a reverse of fortune, his ancestors had set up in their church of Diewick. Prince Massalski, Bishop of Wilna, took refuge in Paris, carrying with him his little niece Helène and her brother. There he became a suitor to Louis the Fifteenth, or, rather, of his Court ladies—rather a contemptible position for a Prince-Bishop, head of the first family in Lithuania. He got very little out of Louis; but in 1774 he was back in Poland, and recovered his estates as the price of persuading the Lithuanians to accept the Permanent Council—superior to both King and Diet—which Russia was forcing on Poland preparatory to annexation. His nephew he had placed under a Frenchman, M. Delorme, who behaved

shamefully, and, after seven years of ill-treatment, handed him over—a puny, half-crazy boy of fourteen—to the friends who had paid thirty thousand francs a year for his education. The niece had been placed in the Abbaye aux Bois, the choicest of aristocratic convents; and her "Mémoires"—for, unless the "*Mémoires de la Princesse de Ligne*" are an ingenious forgery, she began memoir-writing at nine years old—give a curious picture of how "grandes demoiselles" were educated. It was a strange mixture of culture and frivolity. They were taught to talk about books—the fashionable conversation in the Paris of that day; the best opera dancers coached them in the ballets which alternated at their Abbey theatre with plays like Racine's *Esther*; and they were instructed, too, in all the mysteries of housekeeping.

Helène could speak French, but her shyness was interpreted as ignorance. "Poor little thing," said the girls, when she was first brought in, "we must make her speak Polish, and see what it's like. What a funny thing it is to be a Pole!" Then she had to ask for a holiday, and pay her "welcome"—i.e. give twenty-five louis for a grand collation, with ices and all other luxuries, to the whole school. She soon fell ill, owing to the Paris water; and was nearly killed by eating pastry and drinking cider while under medical treatment. The elder girls, as soon as they were locked in for the night, began to eat and drink by the light of a street lamp. Helène begged for some of their dainties; and, when they hesitated, said: "If you don't give it me, I'll tell." Next day she was in a burning fever, and had to be for some time in the infirmary, with the result that when she got well she was allowed a nurse, a lady's maid ("mie"), and a room to herself. A mischievous child she was, proud of putting her cat's feet into walnut shells, getting donkey's ears (our fool's cap) fastened on her head, and a red tongue hung round her neck, because when another girl had written her copy for her she told a lie about it. Naturally her habit of tale-telling often brought her into trouble.

"Tell-tale tit; go and tell our cat to keep a place for you the day you die" is the French girls' equivalent for our children's rhyme. She was cured of it by being tripped up by a big girl, and then run over by all the rest, who were playing "hunt the stag;" each giving her a kick as she went past. Nobody pitied her; one

of the nuns said: "If you were not quite in the wrong, they wouldn't all be against you in that way." These lady nuns were often greatly to be pitied; they had not chosen the life, but were put in simply that the whole property might go to the heir. Thus, there were three sisters of the Duke of Mortemart, who were novices at fifteen and nuns three years after. One of them was the Grande Maitresse Générale, next in power to the Abbess, Madame de Chabrilan.

A former Abbess, of whom there were still traditions, had been the second daughter of the Regent d'Orleans. She was Abbess at eighteen, and certainly had mistaken her vocation. Beautiful as her grandmother, Madame de Montespan, she was so wicked that, thirty years after her death, the nuns were afraid to enter her room alone. Shrieks and the rattling of chains used often to be heard by those who went by it; and occasionally a strong smell of sulphur would almost stifle them. So it remained, with its beautifully painted ceilings and splendid tapestry, unopened except twice a year for cleaning. No wonder Madame de Chartres (such was her title, not that she was married; Madame was a title of respect, as the wives of bourgeois were officially styled *Mademoiselle*) left an ill-savour behind her. She was so cruel that she had several nuns beaten almost to death; and she thought nothing of making them stand up all night chanting. While this was going on, she would be feasting with some of the youngest, whom she tried to make as bad as herself. Even nuns' obedience to an Abbess of the Blood Royal has its limits; and at last a complaint was made to the King, and the Regent came to tell her she must exchange and go to be Abbess of Chelles. But his daughter did not at all approve of leaving Paris and the most aristocratic of French convents to be buried with a pack of commonplace nuns in the country. "Let me stay, father," she begged, "and I will be as mild as hitherto I have been despotic." The Regent was inexorable; and when she called a Chapter of the nuns and begged them to petition for her, the Priores, a Noailles (their motto was, "*le pur sang des Noailles*," so she did not fear even an Orleans Princess) said: "No; we've borne with you long enough and never grumbled. And now all we can do is to pray for your happiness in your new sphere." Then she tried stubbornness; when the Regent's carriages came to take her away, she

would not stir. The Captain of the Guard was sent with orders to carry her off by force; so she undressed, went to bed, and dared the officers to lay hands on a "daughter of France."

"What are we to do?" said the Captain to the Regent.

"Sew her up in a mattress, if it comes to that," was the reply.

At last the tears and entreaties of the nuns prevailed, and she drove off to Chelles. That was enough to furnish gossip for half a century at least; but there were besides the echoes of the present outside world, for the girls often went home, and, of course, brought back with them the latest tittle-tattle; some of it the reverse of edifying—as that Madame de Stainville, the lovely sister-in-law of the Duke de Choiseul, had taken up with Clairval the actor. Helène naïvely explains that she was not much over fifteen, while her husband was at least forty, and was always away with the army.

The result was that the poor wife was sent for the rest of her days to a convent at Nancy, and that her younger daughter came to the Abbaye where the elder sister was already.

"Then," says Helène, "was seen *Mademoiselle de Choiseul's* nobleness of character. When the Duke, or M. de Stainville, or the Duchess of Gramont, or any of the grand relations came to see her, they never asked for her sister; but she steadily refused to come into the 'parloir' unless they came both together, nor would she go to pay a visit at any of the big houses unless her sister also was invited." This shows that the artificial life of the eighteenth-century "*beau monde*" was not wholly base, though it destroyed the family; for how could parents have time for their children when, dining at one, perhaps, with a score of guests, they went at five to the play, and, when it was over, brought home as many as they could to supper.

Mademoiselle de Choiseul was only fourteen when she made this noble stand on behalf of her little sister, who was under a cloud; "*noblesse oblige*" was never thought of in regard to the "lower orders," but a girl's exaggerated idea of her rank and birth would help to keep her right in such a case as this. A Choiseul Stainville must not suffer because a fellow like Clairval had been giving trouble.

Besides the questionable gossip, tricks and practical jokes helped to fill up the

girls' lives. Once they emptied an ink-bottle into the holy-water stoup at the choir door. The nuns went to matins at two a.m., and, knowing the Office by heart, took no lamps, while the dim light at the door was not enough to expose the trick. Before the long prayers were over day broke, and, as they looked at one another, they laughed so loud that the service could not go on.

Another time they tied up the bell ropes, so that while the novice thought she was palling not a sound came. The nuns waited and waited, but no matins' bell; and the poor novice had her wrists half pulled out before one of them came down to see what was going on. This time the culprits were found out; they had used their handkerchiefs, and the initials betrayed them. They had to recite, during play-hours, the seven Penitential Psalms, and to kneel, in their night-caps, in the middle of the choir, next Sunday during High Mass.

As for the ink, the Abbess was in a great rage, said it was an act of impiety, and wanted to report it to the Archbishop; but the sweet-natured Grande Maitresse assured her that "though the deed was dark because of the ink, she could answer for it being no worse than a child's frolic."

During Carnival, Helène was out visiting almost every day. Children's balls at Madame de la Vaupalière, the poor wife whose husband was ruining her with gambling, and who tried to convert him by giving him a box for counters, with her portrait on one side and her children's on the other, and the motto, "Songez à nous." Rehearsals of *Athalie* at the Hôtel Mortenart, Molé, the great actor, superintending and advising Helène, who played Joas, not to declaim, but to talk just as she would to friends. Dancing before the Princess of Condé; that was the order of the day.

Then there was a sort of parallel to the "Boy Bishop," the school-girls took the nuns' places, holding a solemn Chapter—the Chapter House was lent them for the purpose—and electing an Abbess, Prioress, etc. The real Abbess lent her representative her ring and pectoral cross, and during High Mass—which the girls sang—the sham Abbess sat on the throne, and, having been duly incensed, received the girls' confessions; the real nuns being relegated to the galleries. Then the sham Abbess gave a grand dinner with ices—Helène never forgets the ices—and the day ended with a solemn procession to give the real Abbess back her ring, and cross, and vestments.

At that time a wizard, Alliette—Eteilla he anagrammatically called himself—was the rage in Paris. The Vicar of St. Eustache was found dead in his church, and the story in the Abbaye was, that wanting money to pay for his new porch, he had consulted Eteilla, who said: "Meet me at midnight in your church, with a single friend."

The Vicar went, accompanied by his curate. Eteilla drew a circle round them, and began his incantations, having instructed them on no account to step out of the circle. When asked what they wanted, they were to name the sum required. Suddenly the fiend came, and in a voice of thunder cried: "Whataseek ye?" The Vicar was so frightened that he stepped out of the circle, and in a moment was felled to the ground, whence never rose again. The question was then repeated to the Curate. "Fifteen thousand francs," he replied. The fiend held out a purse, but in reaching for it the poor man put his head a little too far, and received a blow which made his neck awry. That was how the nuns accounted for a deformity in their Confessor, at which the girls had often laughed.

But they had real troubles, as well as the excitement of tales of witchcraft. Mdlle. de Montmorency, heiress to the Premiers Barons Chrétiens, betrothed to the Prince of Lambec, had a disease in her arm-bone. They sent her to a family of bone-setters, who were so hated by the faculty that they never could move without police protection. They tortured her for six weeks, and brought on a tumour. Then she was sent to Geneva to be under a quack called "The Mountain Doctor"; and there she died, praying: "Oh, Heaven, take away my fortune, but let me have my life. It is so hard to die at fifteen." The "Magnificent Council" of Geneva gave her a splendid funeral, the letter of thanks for which is still among their archives. Poor child! she had a hard time of it in her early convent days. Madame de Richelieu, the Abbess, spited her; and when she sulked in return, said: "When I see you like that, miss, I could kill you." Whereupon the girl retorted: "It would not be the first time a Richelieu has murdered a Montmorency."

Helène's proudest exploit was heading a barring-out to get rid of an unpopular class-mistress. The conspirators' badge was a bit of green ribbon; and when they found themselves strong enough, they seized the kitchen and larders and resolved

to starve out the sisterhood. They kept a lay-sister as a hostage, and made her provide a fine supper; and then, putting the little ones to bed in some straw, the rest kept guard in turn, and felt (says *Helène*) as if they could keep on at it for ever. Their terms were that the hated mistress should be removed; and they added: "If the two who bear this petition are molested, we'll go in force and whip our tyrant round the four corners of the convent." The nuns were in great alarm; some talked of calling in the police, but "what a scandal that would make"! so the plan adopted was to send for the ring-leaders' mothers, and get them to call their daughters out and take them away. Parental authority was always strong in France; so the girls, when summoned, did not dare to say "no." Then a nun was sent to tell the rest, whom the loss of their leaders had quite disconcerted, that the class-rooms were open, and that all were to take their places. After a brief consultation they went; no one was punished; and in a month the obnoxious teacher was set to other work. *Helène* describes a Confirmation—Archbishop de Beaumont holding out his hand for the nuns to kiss his ring; and several of them, who were strongly Jansenist, standing behind his back and putting out their tongues. Our young Pole had her Confirmation put off several times; because she was always in a scrape. The Archbishop was a despot; after Confirmation he walked into the library, and finding the shelves containing the Fathers empty, asked where they were. The nun in charge said the Sisters were reading them. "Ah," he replied, "no wonder my clergy say they're a better match for the Sorbonne doctors than for the ladies of the Abbaye." He then inquired for Jansenist books. "I've no doubt some of us have some," was the reply. "We've been worried about them so many years, that it would not be in human nature for us not to want to look into them, dull as they are."

Two days later the Archbishop sent and had the whole of the Fathers put back in their places, the bookcases locked, and sealed with his seal. The nuns were indignant; they said that within their walls they recognised no authority but that of the Abbot of Cîteaux, Superior of the Cistercian Order. And to him they appealed. He sent two visitors, who insisted on the Archbishop removing his seals, which, with the fear of Parliament before his eyes, he did. A Chapter was

then held; and when the visitors made their report, the Abbot was so pleased, that he sent the nuns a present of a vast quantity of Burgundy.

Of course, an heiress like *Helène*—even though her property was in Poland—was much sought after. Mirabeau tried to secure her for the Duke of Elboeuf, of the House of Lorraine. But she, "stubborn as the Pope's mule, and incapable of controlling her first impulse," was much taken with the disreputable young Prince of Salm, whom she had met at a girls' ball. However, she ended by marrying the Prince Charles de Ligne, whose father's titles occupy a whole page in the "*Memoirs*," and who seems to have deserved the love that that father lavished on him. The old Prince's treatment of his son was just the reverse of what he himself had received. His military career was so brilliant, that at twenty he was made Colonel of his father's Dragoon Regiment. "It was bad enough to have you as a son, sir," wrote this father, "without the additional misfortune of having you for my Colonel."

Prince Charles's father petted him as much as he had himself been snubbed, taking him up behind him when he was a child, riding with him into a battle, and saying: "How charming it would be, Charles, if we were to get a little wound together!" "The boy laughed, and swore, and got excited, and spoke quite like a man." His father's letters to him from Bohemia, when he was engineering on the Elbe, are so delightful, that they make one long for the answers.

So *Helène* and Charles were married, and the feasting at Brussels, and at Bel Ciel, the summer palace of the de Lignes, was something marvellous. But all is not gold that glitters. Father de Ligne wrote to a friend: "Charles has married a pretty little Pole; but her family has given us paper instead of hard cash, so I must e'en go to Russia and see what can be done." Poland, in fact, had been finally dismembered; and Catherine's officers were receiving the Prince Bishop's rents. So to Russia de Ligne went, taking Berlin on his way, and capping jokes with Frederick the Great. "What a climate! My oranges, lemons, my whole garden is starved." "Yes, you've too many grenadiers (pomegranate trees)," replied the Prince. Catherine received him so graciously as to make Prince Potemkin furiously jealous. But she was fooling him. She gave him her

portrait in a diamond ring, and a rich parure of jewels for his daughter-in-law; but she did not give the four hundred thousand roubles which were Helène's dowry. "I couldn't press it," said the Prince; "it seemed want of delicacy to take advantage of the favour she had shown me."

More festivities at Bel Œil, to which came the Count of Artois and the flower of the French Court. Then the birth of a baby girl, followed by a winter in Vienna, listening to Mozart and Haydn, among a crowd of Hungarian magnates; and here Helène and her husband found they did not love one another. She had snubbed him in Paris, where she was a pet of all the noblest houses; and at Vienna he showed her how fond all the Archduchesses and their friends were of him. There was a Countess Kinsky, née Dietrichstein. Poor woman! she and her husband had been betrothed when children. So, one day he drove in from his garrison town, went to church with her, kissed her hand and said:

"Madame, we've obeyed our parents; and now I'm back to the woman without whom I can't live. So, adieu."

Prince Charles got fonder than he ought to have been of the lovely Kinsky; and when he went to join his regiment, Helène got leave to visit her uncle the Bishop. This was in 1788. At the taking of Salzey, Charles was the first to scale the ramparts, and, in spite of the desperate efforts of the Turks, he managed to help up those behind him. Emperor Joseph invested him on the spot with the Order of Maria Theresa. The same thing happened soon after at Belgrade. "More than half the glory of taking it belonged to Prince Charles," said the Emperor.

Meanwhile Helène met at Warsaw the fascinating and already twice-married Count Vincent Potocki, and fell in love for the first time. She at once set about getting a divorce; but the de Lignes did not like to lose the vast fortune which Helène had managed to recover, and which she was spending at Warsaw in fabulous luxury. In her uncle's palace she built a theatre, planned a magic garden with "surprises," after the fashion of the day; had her bathroom lined with three thousand Dresden china tiles, each a marvel of delicate painting; and so on. The little daughter, happily, was being brought up by her mother-in-law, out of the way of this unwholesome Warsaw life.

So things went on. The de Lignes would not have a divorce; the Prince-

Bishop would not pay the dowry, when the Revolution broke out, and, in 1792, Austria, like her neighbours, invaded France. The Duke of Brunswick, three or four Archdukes, General Clairfayt, the Prince of Lambesc, and a host of "émigrés," dashed into Champagne, expecting to find the country ripe in their favour; and instead they found Dumouriez and hard fighting. Prince Charles was with his regiment, and was shot through the head in the Pass of Croix au Bois. His father, till then so light-hearted and joyous, never smiled after he heard the news; but three months after Charles's death Helène married Potocki.

When she heard the news, her words were: "I am free. It is God's will. That gun was loaded from all eternity."

Charles's will is curious. To his daughter he left his wife's portrait, that she might remember not to follow her example; to his dearest friend he left his heart wrapped in one of her own handkerchiefs; to his daughter by this friend, and to a little Turkish boy whom he had rescued in the sack of Belgrade and adopted, he left most of his personal estate, begging his sister to try to get them married. Poor fellow! with a more loving wife he would have been a different creature! Their faults were the outcome of a society which was rotten almost to the core, and which the modern "beau monde" had best keep as far as possible from imitating. In one thing, happily, we are not likely to imitate it. Girls of fifteen will never in this age be married to young men whom they have scarcely seen, and with whom they have never exchanged a word.

AN UNHAPPY MEDIUM.

GODFREY COWPER and I had been chums at Marlborough; but when our school-days were over, our ways in life separated so far that for some years we entirely lost sight of each other. Cowper, who, despite a considerable alloy of vanity and selfishness, was an unusually brilliant and attractive fellow, passed a first-rate examination and obtained a good berth in the War Office; while I, the stubborn, erratic, and not too-highly gifted youngest son of a large family, was shipped off to Florida to make a living by orange growing.

If I were to detail those events of my Colonial life which led me first to a super-

ficial interest in, and then to an absorbing study of animal magnetism, I should make a long and, no doubt, an uninteresting story. Suffice it to say, that my hitherto undeveloped mental powers were gradually drawn out by and concentrated on this mysterious and fascinating science, and that, as I discovered the extraordinary force of my own hypnotic powers, I decided to turn my natural resources to account in the battle of life, and to leave the cultivation of oranges to those who had nothing better to do. This plan was almost as easy to carry out as to form in the venture-some New World; and for some years I wandered through the cities of the United States, lecturing and performing experiments, which became more and more complicated and successful as I continued my investigations.

It was in the zenith of my success—and, when the name which I had assumed at the request of my parents, to preserve my incognito, was already well known in England—that I made up my mind to try my luck in London.

My family looked coldly on my return. The profession I had followed was sadly at variance with their old-fashioned opinions, and their reception did not encourage me to look up any of my old friends; therefore, when Godfrey Cowper and I met, it was by chance, at one of Mrs. Lyonesse's semi-artistic, semi-scientific soirées, where I was engaged to give a private séance.

I recognised my former schoolfellow at a glance, in the polished, well-dressed man about town, who seemed such a favourite with all the ladies to whom he spoke. He, however, was apparently too much engrossed with his numerous fair friends to have any attention to spare for one of the hired amusements for the evening until such time as attention was almost compulsory.

As I began my lecture, and while every face in the room was turned towards me, I closely scanned the assembled guests, seeking what it was never difficult for my practised eye to find: the most sympathetic medium present.

I discovered her. It was a lady, sitting alone, unnoticed, and evidently not courting notice, in the shadow of a great stand of flowers. She was tall and fair, dressed simply and inexpensively; so plainly in fact that I imagined her to be a poor relation or a dependent; but when, at my request, Mrs. Lyonesse led me to her, I was surprised to find myself being presented to Mrs. Cowper. She started and blushed

violently, and, as I observed the timid, almost appealing look of her large, grey eyes, I could scarcely imagine her to be the wife of my sparkling, self-possessed, quondam friend. Before I had done more than bow, however, Cowper himself joined us, holding out his hand to me.

"I've just puzzled you out," he said. "These centuries of absence have changed you a good deal, besides metamorphosing your name into Carruthers, the mesmerist. I see you have selected my wife to make a display of your powers on. Do you know, Felicia, that this is an old chum of mine who wants to play these tricks on you?"

Mrs. Cowper looked from her husband to me with a look of gentle deprecation, which plainly told how much rather she would remain in her corner.

"I hope you don't seriously object, Mrs. Cowper," I said. "There is no one present by whose help I can make such a satisfactory demonstration of what I have been saying."

"Oh, no, she doesn't object," laughed Godfrey, "she will be delighted to shine in such a useful light." She herself did not answer, the quiver round her mouth looked like anything rather than a manifestation of delight. She was evidently longing for courage to decline. "Now then, Licia," went on her husband, "every one is on the tiptoe of expectation to see what this old wizard is going to turn you into—don't be silly."

But I was already scrutinizing the faces present to find a more willing, if a less ductile medium. Cowper looked annoyed as a ready victim was found in a middle-aged spinster; and though I was too much engaged to turn my attention to the group I had just left, I was fully aware that he administered a smart rebuke to his wife before he left her again alone in her seat.

But if I had for the moment relinquished my attempt to try the effects of hypnotism on Mrs. Cowper, I was by no means prepared to renounce it altogether, for each moment of casual observation convinced me more fully that she was a more ready and impressionable medium than any with whom it had hitherto been my lot to deal.

Questions eagerly discussed and at present only partially solved, recurred to me with overpowering force, as the presence of my friend's girl-wife grew more familiar to me—doubtful points on which any new fact would be a gain to science, enigmas the satisfactory solution

of which would be the crowning glory to any career.

Before I left Mrs. Lyonesse's that evening, I had found an opportunity of persuading Mrs. Cowper to submit to my experiments the following day in private. She did not require much persuasion, and I felt that I was taking a rather underhand advantage of the lecture her husband had just bestowed on her.

The next day I arrived punctual to my appointment at the address in Brixton which Cowper had given me. I was surprised to find that he lived in an unmistakeably third-rate house, and that the servant who opened the door was just as unmistakeably a lodging-house maid-of-all-work. I asked for Mrs. Cowper, but the only occupant of the dingy little upstairs sitting-room into which I was shown was Cowper, who lay smoking on a horse-hair sofa.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Cowper," I said, as we shook hands. "I must confess I had timed this visit to fall in your office hours, so that I might play what you are pleased to call my charlatanical tricks on your wife, in your absence."

"Ah, indeed!" he replied lightly, "that was very considerate of you; but you reckoned without your host! I am no longer the slave of routine, and the office exists no more as far as I am concerned."

"What!" I cried, "you don't mean to say you have lost your appointment!"

"Oh, dear no! I haven't lost it. To use the word 'lose' implies regret; it has lost me—I resigned. It was too mechanical, too circumscribed a career for me."

"Your ambitions are lofty, my dear fellow."

"They always were," he replied, unconscious of any irony in my remark. "A good deal loftier than Red-tapism liked?"

"And now—what have you taken up to replace Red Tape?" I began to understand the dinginess of his entourage now.

"Oh, now I'm going in for literature, that is more elevating, isn't it? It's quite a long story, and would, perhaps, bore you," he said with an air of great self-satisfaction. "But it is undoubtedly my mission."

"No doubt you are a good judge in the matter," I returned. "What particular course does your inspiration take?"

"Oh, there is but one line possible for the man of letters in these days; we are writing one of those political economy novels, which deal with the obscurer

phases of life. We have one already for the publishers, but society is perhaps scarcely ready for it."

"It is a fine programme I must admit; may I ask, is Mrs. Cowper your helpmate in your great work?"

"My wife!" cried Cowper. "Felicia! Bless me, Bob, what a suggestion from you who profess to be a thought-reader, or something of the sort! Why, if there is a woman who hasn't an original idea in the world, it is Felicia. No, the story of my literary partnership is the story of my—redemption I might say—while the story of my matrimonial partnership, that is the story of—Felicia, is, on the contrary—we used to be very thick, you know, Bob, you and I—the story of a random plunge."

"That sounds very dramatic," I replied. "But I must say that this plunge into literature seems to me still more random. You will scarcely expect it to compensate you at present for the orthodox livelihood you have given up."

"You mean, I ought to have kept two irons in the fire. No, that was impossible, Bob. Besides, why should you preach prudence to me—you, who have given up the solidity of bales of oranges to traffic in spirit-rapping?"

"Stay, Cowper," I replied; "as a man who studies the dark phases of life, you must learn to distinguish between the science of which I am an exponent, and the humbug of table-turning."

"I can't say that I see much distinction. Of course it's all trickery and deception; but if you are clever enough to persuade people to the contrary, and to profit by their credulity—*tant mieux pour toi*!"

"May we call Mrs. Cowper?" I asked. "With her permission I will give you proof which you cannot refuse to accept."

She was summoned.

"Now, Felicia," said her husband, with an assumption of playfulness in his tone which jarred with the timid look she gave him, "this old charlatan is going to show me how he does his tricks. He shan't hurt you. In fact, as I told you last night, his performance is all a hoax, and he is a wonderful old fellow to make a living by it."

"Place yourself here, Mrs. Cowper," I said, "opposite to me, and don't be afraid. In a few moments you will not be conscious that any experiment is being tried on you."

In a wonderful short time she was under

magnetic influence, and I begged Cowper to observe the nature of her trance. I bade him call her; try to raise her from her seat. He could not refuse to admit that she was no longer a free agent. "I grant you this much," he said, after a few moments. "Against my will I grant it you; but this is only the passive side of the question. You have said that in this state of coma she can see things which in her normal state she has not the power to see. That is harder to prove, for unless it were a secret of my own that she wormed out, I could not help suspecting some dodgery."

"Have you any letters," I asked, "letters which you are quite sure Mrs. Cowper has not read, nor had any chance of reading?"

"Yes," he replied triumphantly, "that is the best test. Here is a letter which I know she has never seen," and he drew a closely-written sheet from his pocket.

"You are sure I am not acquainted with its contents?"

"Perfectly sure; and equally sure that your clairvoyante will not enlighten you."

I thought otherwise. I asked her to describe the letter her husband held. There was no answer.

"Can you not see it?" I demanded.

"I can see nothing."

"Look towards your husband," I said with great force. But she averted her head. I turned towards Cowper, who stood behind me. His eyes were fixed upon his wife, the pupils were contracted, his whole soul seemed to shine out of them.

"You may or may not believe in mesmerism, Godfrey," I said; "but one thing is certain that, consciously or unconsciously, your will, to which your wife is evidently obedience itself, has counteracted mine, and has protected the secret of your letter."

He started, took his eyes from his wife, and flushed a little.

"You are talking nonsense," he replied rather roughly. "There is no secret in the letter. It is from my partner, on business."

I am gifted with uncommonly sharp eyes; perhaps Cowper was not aware that I had had an opportunity of remarking that his partner's—the author of his redemption—letter-paper and handwriting were those of a fashionable woman. I did not care, under the circumstances, to prolong the experiment; before, however, I recalled Mrs. Cowper from her trance, I

bade her meet me at noon the following day by the fountain in the Temple Court. The question, whether a suggestion imparted during the hypnotic trance can remain suspended unconsciously in the mind, was one of those I wished to solve, and is, indeed, one of the most important relating to animal magnetism.

The following day I waited eagerly at the appointed place to see the result of my attempt. I was not disappointed; the neighbouring clocks were only beginning to strike when Mrs. Cowper appeared down the narrow passage which shuts off noisy Fleet Street from the tranquil Temple. She was looking straight before her, walking as if entirely unconscious of where she was or what she sought. A rush of triumph came over me; I had not been mistaken either in my powers or in her receptivity. It was only when I spoke to her that she seemed to realise her surroundings.

"Ah, Mr. Carruthers!" she said, "there you are."

"Were you looking for me?" I asked.

"Yes, I must have been."

"Did Cowper tell me you would find me here?"

"No; he certainly never mentioned the Temple. He teased me a great deal this morning about my having made an appointment, but he would not tell me where or with whom he meant. Have you made me come here?" she added, looking me sharply in the face. For a moment I thought she resented the violation of her individual liberty; the next I saw that I had been mistaken.

"I hope you are not angry with me?" I said.

"No," she answered slowly. "No, I am not angry with you. Some people might not like it; but I, for my part, am glad that you have been successful. Does it mean that I am a good medium?"

"Yes; exceptionally good."

"You get your living by mesmerism, Godfrey says," she began, somewhat awkwardly—"by lecturing, and by giving séances like the one last night?"

"I do."

"And do you often want a medium?"

"Invariably."

Her face brightened.

"Would it not then be an advantage to have one—a good one, such as you say I am, always at your disposal?—I mean—oh, Mr. Carruthers, I ought not to ask you—but—"

"My dear Mrs. Cowper," I cried, overpowered with astonishment, "you do not mean that you are going to offer me such valuable service as yours? Of course, after what you said at Mrs. Lyonesse's, I am well aware that you are not doing this for your amusement, for such valuable service it would be an understood thing that you should accept a substantial remuneration."

"Oh yes," she replied tremulously; "that was what I wanted to say."

"And your husband?" I asked, though I could easily guess there would be no opposition on his part to a substantial sum being paid into the household treasury, while he and his mysterious partner were writing novels.

"He has no objection," she replied very sadly. "I asked him this morning. Godfrey and I are just now rather—rather badly off. It will be better by-and-by, when Godfrey has done his great book; but while he is busy with it—and, of course it is a very long business—I must see if I cannot earn something."

"Your husband has a very noble wife, Mrs. Cowper," I said.

"I'm afraid I am more of a burden to him than anything else," she said, more to herself than to me. "If Godfrey had not married a poor, stupid girl, perhaps he would be quite well off now."

Her tone, and the wistful look of her eyes, told me all of her history, which her husband's words of the previous day had failed to convey, and I mentally resolved that, as far as in me lay, I would lighten the load that evidently lay on this trusting girl's heart.

This was the way in which my connection with Felicia Cowper arose. She was far more responsible for it than I was. Not that I would shift the blame, which has since fallen on me, to her. Such fault as there was was neither mine nor hers, but that of her husband, who left her to fight the battle for them both, while he dreamt away his time in a fool's paradise of egotism and flattery.

In a short time I became extremely fashionable as a superior kind of conjuror, and for the moment no one in London was more talked of than the beautiful medium, on whose plastic mind my will could play as the skilled musician on the most responsive instrument.

My public and semi-public engagements were numerous; but, besides these, my time was much engaged with what,

for a better term, I must call my private practice, for it was, for the moment, the height of fashion with the upper ten thousand, flavoured with a telling spice of the forbidden and the supernatural, to have private interviews, and to ask all sorts of questions of my wonderful clairvoyante through me.

I did not encourage this. Professionally I looked upon it as a waste of invaluable energy; but Felicia, to whom the large fees we received were of the greatest importance, was indefatigable.

Of her husband I saw nothing, or next to nothing. His only recognition of his wife's self-imposed task was that he allowed the cheques which represented her earnings to be made payable to him.

It was my interest in Felicia which induced me to make inquiries about my former schoolfellow's romantic partnership, and I was not surprised to find that he was repaying her faithful love by something worse than his very evident neglect.

Such a popularity, however, as we had enjoyed cannot continue for ever. In course of time my audiences grew smaller, and our diminished number of engagements showed that public curiosity was satisfied. I resolved, therefore, to return to America before we had altogether dropped out of notice in England. The question was, how could I continue my lectures alone after having had for two years such valuable help from my medium? I felt that I should lose a large claim to popularity if I were deprived of this help. I felt, moreover, that to lose her presence about me would be to lose all. I began to wonder if I could persuade Felicia to accompany me.

I made the proposal to her as carefully and considerately as I could.

"I fear it is out of the question, Mr. Carruthers," she replied. "Godfrey would dislike it so much."

"I think," I ventured to suggest, "that he would not dislike your doing, in America, what he has freely consented to your doing among the people he knows in London."

"I did not mean that. I mean that it would interrupt his work if he had to go to America."

"My dear Mrs. Cowper!" I cried, "I would not for the world interrupt that mythological novel-writing of his. I was not thinking of asking him to go with us."

"Do you think," she asked, "that I would leave my husband to travel about in that way?"

"I see no objection. Such journeys are made continually by professional people. You and I are professionals. Godfrey has confided you absolutely to me for the last two years." She shook her head. "I do not think," I continued, "that he would hesitate for one moment to give his consent."

"Mr. Carruthers," she broke out passionately, "do not say such a thing. You do not understand Godfrey. You misjudge him. I will not leave him; nor will I believe one of the cruel things people say of him."

She left me abruptly, and from that day there was a great change in her; and, though I carefully avoided all reference to the sore subject, she became so depressed that several times she was unable to keep engagements we had made.

I began to wonder if she had spoken of my proposal to her husband, and been mortally wounded by the coolness with which he certainly would have heard it.

At last I resolved to fix the date of my departure, and, in anticipation of it, a great farewell séance was arranged at the house of one of my most enthusiastic disciples. When the evening came, Felicia, who formerly had been the soul of punctuality, kept me waiting for some time. I began to fear that this our last appearance together was to be a fiasco. She arrived at last, looking even more pale and ill than usual; besides which, her face had a fixed, half-unconscious expression, as if she were already partly under magnetic influence. Her hands were tightly clasped in front of her, and I could see that she held something between them. Her appearance altogether made me so uneasy that I was more than half disposed to seek a medium among my audience, as I had formerly been accustomed to do. My host, however, was most anxious that his guests should not be disappointed by the substitution of any one for my well-known wonderful medium, and Felicia herself, when I questioned her, refused to admit that she was suffering.

She seated herself in front of the assembly, and I made the necessary passes; but my usually abnormally sensitive medium sat with eyes fixed on space, and hands still clasped together, apparently untouched by the familiar force. I felt reluctant to persist in the attempt, and was on the point of giving up, when, suddenly her eyes met mine. A flutter passed quickly over her features, and I saw that

her will had returned to her usually submissive attitude. I put my first question to her. She began to speak, but her answer died away after a few words; her eyelids closed and her head sank forward. A horrible misgiving came over me. I hastily made the passes necessary to release her from the trance; but to these she remained still more insensible than to the commencement of my attempt to bring the trance about. I went to her and took her hands. They lay in mine inert and nerveless. I lifted her sunken eyelids. My heart gave a sickening bound, and then stood still. I raised her in my arms and carried her out of the gaze of those careless, curious eyes; but not with any hope of restoring consciousness to her. I had seen enough to know that Felicia Cowper would never return again to the sadness and weariness of her lonely existence among us.

I dare say many people can remember the indignant outcry of the public when her sudden and tragical death was made known. Unparing blame was showered on me, who, as people said, had mercilessly overworked a woman too much under my influence to be able to resist my will. There was even some talk, among a few ardent philanthropists, of getting up a public prosecution.

For Felicia's own sake, however — so that those sorrows which she had borne so bravely might remain sacred secrets — I attempted no justification of myself; for, in justifying myself I should have had to publish the contents of the letter which I took from her dead hands, and which I knew had been her death-blow. It was in her husband's handwriting, and ran thus:

"I am about to take a step, Felicia, which I have long meditated. I am about to leave for ever an environment which has long been more than irksome to me. Our foolish, hasty marriage is, as you know, the great regret of my life. This regret, I believe you share; but whether you share it or not, I am sure you will not wonder that I at last shake myself free from the outward semblance of a bond which has long ceased to exist. In all probability our paths will never again cross; for I leave England to-night to begin a new life under far-off skies. Forget me if you can, and be happy if you can. It would sadly mar the hope and joy which opens before me if I thought you would waste a tear over what has passed.

"Yours, G. C."

When Felicia had been quietly buried in

a suburban cemetery I went back to the States. Whether the tragical consequence of his heartless letter ever did reach Godfrey Cowper, "to mar the joy and hope of his new life," I do not know; nor whether, hearing of Felicia's death, he, too, blamed the guilt of her murder on the only man who would willingly have laid down his own life to make hers less sad.

TEMPESTS AND SUN-SPOTS.

THERE is little need to inform our readers, scientific or unscientific, that Monsieur H. Faye is an eminent French astronomer, who possesses the faculty of stating, in the clearest possible language, the results of his studies and his observations. Of course there will occur scientific terms which the educated reader can easily interpret; but not more than are necessary for the technical accuracy of his explanations. But he never clouds his writings with obscurity or fine-sounding phrases, in order to give an air of greater profundity to the knowledge which is actually within his grasp.

M. Faye, then, is, above all, an astronomer. His occupation lies amidst the heavenly bodies. He has recorded his ideas respecting the formation of our Solar System. Why, then, should he busy himself with things terrestrial and take trouble to investigate phenomena occurring on earth? For fifteen long years and more he has been working at the Laws of Cyclones and other Storms of inferior magnitude, and has not yet converted all his opponents, although, it must be confessed, their opposition is now considerably fainter. But let the cobbler, his adversaries say, stick to his last, and the star-gazer to his telescopes.

The same was urged when Galileo asserted that the earth revolved on its axis, completing its revolution in twenty-four hours. It was no concern of his whether the earth turned round or stood still. Its immobility was a theological dogma, about which the Church alone had the right to have a voice. All that he could argue was erroneous, and, what was worse, heretical. Did not every one who walked on the earth feel that it did not and could not stir?

And what can be the use of cudgelling our brains about the Origin and Course of Tempests? Like poor King Lear, we can defy them and shout,

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks; rage, blow!

if that be any satisfaction; but it is in vain to tell them: "Do not blow; do not rage. Turn back again, instead of rushing forward."

Very true. Nevertheless, it is not un-serviceable, when caught in a cyclone, to know the shortest way out of it; or, when warned by telegram of its approach, to be sure in which direction it can be best avoided. "What can't be cured must be endured;" but there is small wisdom in enduring what we can run away from.

Towards the close of the last century, and at the beginning of the present, navigators—the persons most directly interested in such questions—set themselves to work to study tempests, with the firm resolution to leave all theories aside, to reject every preconceived idea, relying solely on the directions of the wind as registered on board the ships assailed by it. By this means they arrived at the conviction that a tempest is not formed by winds blowing more or less directly towards a centre, but by winds blowing circularly round that centre.

Hence the name of "cyclone" given to such tempests by Piddington. As soon as that character was recognised sailors could deduce the rules which a ship ought to follow when caught in a tempest; amongst others, this, the most important of all, since it helps to determine the position which a ship occupies in respect to the centre of the storm: turn your face to the wind and stretch out your right arm, the centre of the tempest lies in the direction of that arm (in the northern hemisphere). It is Buys-Ballot's famous rule. In other words, the gyrations are circular, and, on our hemisphere, their movement is direct, namely, the reverse of the movement of the hands of a watch.

On opening a record of six hundred whirlwinds observed in the United States, from 1794 to 1881, M. Faye finds that the direction of the whirling is indicated for one hundred of them. In all these hundred instances, the direction was from right to left.

Another law, not less striking, is that every tempest is accompanied by a rapid fall of the barometer, the minimum of which occurs at the centre of the tempest.

A notable instance of the harmony—if I may so speak—or all-pervading law which reigns throughout the universe, is furnished by the circumstance which diverted M. Faye's attention from stellar to terrestrial phenomena. He avows that

it was a question of pure astronomy which led him to study the cyclones of our atmosphere.

By watching the motions of the spots on the sun, he arrived at a very precise conclusion. Those spots are due to descending gyratory or whirling movements round a vertical axis, produced by the currents which traverse the photosphere, and which suck down with them the relatively cooler gases of the chromosphere. From that to the establishment of a complete analogy, in the mechanical point of view, between the spots on the sun and earthly cyclones, was only a step.

It was at once objected that, in the unanimous opinion of meteorologists, our cyclones are not descending but ascending movements. He was therefore induced to study cyclones, in order to ascertain whether, on earth, gyratory movements proceed differently to those on the sun—whether the dynamical laws of fluids are, or are not, universally the same.

The principal difficulty arose from the fact that meteorologists observe their cyclones in our atmosphere from below, from the surface of the earth, whilst astronomers look down upon the sun's spots from above. But if, after placing before a meteorologist Carrington's admirable maps of the Solar Spots, or the photographs of the Kew Observatory, we transport ourselves in thought above the terrestrial globe, so as to show the said meteorologist a cyclone or a tornado in the same way as astronomers observe a sun-spot, it may be safely asserted that he will find a striking resemblance between the two phenomena.

Like the spots, cyclones at starting have a regularly circular shape, formed by the conical opening, or funnel made in a stratum of brightly-illuminated clouds. In the centre of this cloudy funnel is a region of calm, in which the transparency of the air prevents it from sensibly reflecting the light. In this, the observer will behold a circular hole, relatively black and perfectly defined, exactly like the nucleus of sun-spots.

Soon, the cyclone, proceeding on its way, like the spots, will enlarge itself beyond measure, still like the spots. Before long, it will grow misshapen, lengthened; then it will subdivide into segments, like the spots, and give rise to several partial gyrations within the same funnel-shaped opening. These, separating from each other, will become circular and will form a

sort of chaplet, or string of independent smaller cyclones, following the track of the parent cyclone, again like the sun-spots. At other times, the cyclone will lose its strength and vanish without decomposing into smaller cyclones; which sometimes also happens to the sun-spots.

Our meteorologist, in short, will find in his terrestrial phenomenon every detail which our drawings or our photographs represent every day as occurring on the sun, with the exception of two differences which are easy to explain. The first is, that a cyclone travels from the equator towards either pole, following a trajectory, or line of march, strongly curved to the west, like a parabola, whilst a spot moves parallel to the sun's equator. The cause of this is simply that the currents which, on the sun, generate the whirling movements, follow the sun's parallels; whilst, on the earth, similar currents, flowing towards the poles, are partly made to swerve, by the rotation of the globe, first towards the west, and then towards the east.

The second difference is that the gas drawn down in cyclones is air which acquires, during its descent, very nearly the temperature and density of the strata which it traverses, so that on escaping below, at the foot of the cyclone, it has no ascensional tendency, whilst on the sun, the gas sucked down is almost pure hydrogen, which remounts riotously around the spot much higher than its former level, in consequence both of its specific lightness and of the enormous increase of heat which it has absorbed while penetrating beneath the photosphere.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"HE IS ONE OF THOSE WHO ARE BEAUTIFUL AND HAPPY."

MORE than half an hour had slipped by, before Barty called Dr. Graves to witness the Colonel's signature. As the Doctor was leaving the room, he turned round and said to Paul, "I wish I could stay here to-night. But I have a patient at Wilford whom I am still more anxious about. You will be here? I dare say

you could sit with him part of the night! If there is any change, send for me at once."

"Yes, I shall be here. I will sit up with him," said Paul, almost in spite of himself.

He saw that the Doctor was very uneasy, and he felt it impossible, whatever his own wish—almost necessity—might be, to leave his old friend's death-bed for an explanation with Celia. If she were taking some cruel advantage of his absence, why, she must take it; she no doubt felt that he was safe away, and she was right. He could not fail the Colonel at this time, even if the alternative were losing her. Then he thought of her unwillingness that he should come away; what did that mean? Did she want him to save her from herself? What could possibly be the motive that was leading her, if she did not care for this other man? Money? But he himself had enough to give her everything she wanted. Then Paul resolved that he would distract himself with these questions no more. No one could give him the answers, but Celia herself; and as he could not fly to her to-night, without behaving cruelly and selfishly, he must leave his fate in her hands—Mrs. Percival had once told him that he ought to trust her. This letter was certainly a supreme difficulty, and yet its strange expressions seemed to mean that, after all, she loved him. "Yours always," these words especially were a ray of light through very dark clouds.

While Paul waited for the Doctor and Mr. Cole to come down, he wrote a telegram and a short letter to Celia. The telegram was:

"What does your letter mean? Do nothing till I see you."

The letter:

"MY DARLING,—Yours is the most puzzling letter I have ever received. I have read it twenty times, and understand it no better. I almost started off at once, but the Colonel is too ill for me to leave him. Please write and tell me what your letter really means. Sometimes I think you may have written it by way of a joke; but that would not be like you. Anyhow, I don't understand a word of it. The house is getting on well; I think you will like it. I have been for a long walk in the woods this afternoon; when I came back I found your letter, which quite knocked me down, but I am gradually coming to think that it is some extraordinary piece of utter nonsense,

which I am too stupid to understand. Why did you write it?

"Your faithful and devoted

"PAUL ROMAINE."

The writing of this letter to Celia did Paul's spirits a little good. When one is hurt by the person one loves best, the only comforting thing, perhaps, is to go and tell that same person all about it. Any amount of sympathy from other people is of no use; we want to be healed by the same hand that wounded us; then the wound is nothing.

Having appealed in this way to his love against herself, Paul resolved that he would not read that letter of hers again till he had her answer to the one he had just written; and so, having put his trouble under lock and key, he was ready to meet Dr. Graves with a quiet countenance, and to take his directions for the night in a less absent manner than before.

Ford drove off to the station, with Mr. Cole and the telegram; Dr. Graves also drove away, though in evident anxiety; and as night closed in upon the lonely common, under that dark, snow-laden sky, the sick man lay quiet and contented, and watched Paul as he sat by the fire, with Di at his feet, his shadow hardly moving on the wall.

He was not to talk; the Doctor had said so; and indeed the Colonel was too tired to talk; and Paul, though wide awake, wished for nothing better than to sit there, and wait, and watch the red, toppling castles in the fire. Here he was, after all; and a few hours ago he had fancied himself tearing through another night journey, on business which might perhaps, he thought, be truly enough described as "of life and death." No, rather of life alone; and that was why he found himself still here; because there were times when death must be stronger than life, and must claim and use its power.

As Paul sat through the hours of that night, in silence only disturbed by the Colonel's heavy breathing, and a sigh now and then from the dog, he began thinking over the past year of his life; the first, the only year, it seemed to him, in which he had really lived; for it was not much more than a year since he first saw Celia.

In those days, when she first came to live with her aunt, soon after her father's death, Celia had lost for a time the sunny pleasantness which most people thought her chief charm. Her smiles shone through a cloud of impatient sadness. It was not at once that she began to be happy without

her father, whose loss, with all his faults, had been the one great trouble of her life. But even then she liked Paul's admiration, though she took little notice of him. It was not till some months later that some hint about Paul from her aunt made her seriously think of marrying him. He was not exactly the sort of man who amused her, of course; but she was clever enough to know, not being in love with anybody, that the man who amused her now was not the man who would spoil her thoroughly and make her happy always; and so she was invariably nice to Paul, and let him drift on into that perfect devotion which she meant to reward by-and-by.

Paul looked back on those months now, and wondered to think how smoothly the course of his love had run. At the time he had been plagued with anxiety—he could not persuade himself that Celia could ever think him worthy of her; the hard work for his degree was easy and delightful, because, in his own estimation at least, it brought him nearer Celia. Then came his triumph; then they sent him off abroad; then followed those few strange days at Woolsborough, when he could not quite understand Celia's doings, entirely as he trusted her. That Saturday, when she was out with Vincent; that Sunday, when she sent him out of Vincent's way—every look and word of hers at that time came back very vividly now. Vincent's sulky face—certainly his going to India had been a great relief, and everything had gone on perfectly well since. One or two little clouds, but they were not worth remembering. Perhaps they had been woven out of Paul's own morbid fancy. Mrs. Percival would certainly say so. But now this letter!

For a short time the thought of the letter had been numbed, as it were—driven away into the land of dreams by these recollections on which Paul's mind had been dwelling. Now it came back with a sudden sting of pain. In its unnatural mystery it was itself like a bad dream. Paul had resolved not to make sure of its reality by reading it again; but there was no need for that. He knew every word of it too well. It was plain that no thinking could help him to understand it; and yet, as he frowned over the thought of it, something darted suddenly through his mind. It was one of those flashes of thought, those intuitions, which come and go almost too quickly to print themselves on one's consciousness, and Paul had no

time to pursue it then, though, somehow, he knew that it caused him no surprise, and was only the withdrawing of a veil. The Colonel stirred, and spoke so low that Paul could not hear him without coming to the bed.

"Beat your trouble; don't let it beat you," he was saying. "If you can't have what you want, go without it, and don't cry for the moon. You can do your duty in the dark, I suppose. Don't be a coward. Why shouldn't she know best? Percival may be a better man. At any rate she thinks so, and she has a right to her opinion."

His eyes were open, and he looked at Paul while he said these things, speaking in short, broken sentences. Paul knew that he was talking to himself; wandering a little, perhaps, for he evidently expected no reply. His mind had gone back to his own younger days, and this sound advice was meant for no one but himself; he had, indeed, turned it into practice, and lived on it all through his faithful life. But little as the Colonel dreamed it, while his eyelids drooped again, and he fell once more into his heavy, unconscious sleep, the words had a meaning too for Paul. All unknowing, the Colonel had brought a message to Paul, of which not one word was mistaken or out of place. The thing had already flashed through Paul's brain as he sat by the fire, and the Colonel's words only confirmed it. After a minute, he moved back to his chair by the fire, and, deliberately breaking his resolution of the evening, took out Celia's letter and read it once again. He understood it now; he knew that he was reading a letter not written to himself, but to Vincent Percival. In this new light every word was clear.

It was characteristic of Paul that the discovery of Celia's falseness, the great shock which changed all his life, was met at once in the spirit of a strong man, rather than of a passionate boy. Till now, Celia had influenced and played with the weakest part of his nature; her magic had been at work, smiling, and stroking down into slavery every independent thought; but she had not yet conquered his whole nature so far that he could not rise and shake himself, like a hero of old, and go out scornfully, when he saw that he had been deceived.

The letter, as he read it now, was a full and clear explanation of Celia, and her reasons for marrying him. All that had ever puzzled him was explained by this letter. The Celia he had loved and

trusted did not exist at all—this was Celia. It was incredible, but true; and none the less certain, because it seemed impossible.

In the long, dark silence of that night, Paul had plenty of time to study the different aspects of this great surprise which had come upon him. For it was a great surprise; though, at the first moment, he had felt that he had known it all along, and that his misgivings, which seemed so unreasonable, his consciousness of something, some barrier between himself and Celia—her own quick words now and then, when even she herself revolted at deceiving him—all these, a hundred little thoughts, acts, sayings, which had seemed mere fancy or insignificant nonsense at the time, were only flashes of light from the truth so carefully hidden.

"I have been a fool—an utter fool!" Paul told himself, as he sat over the fire with his face buried in his hands.

The Colonel dying, Celia dead; it certainly was a night to be remembered. His thoughts wandered back to the Colonel's own old troubles, of which he spoke so bravely. His example might be worth following—and yet there was no comparison. The Colonel had never been engaged to Mrs. Percival; she had never deceived him; she had flirted with him a little, perhaps, according to her nature, but nothing more. Her marriage was a disappointment, and a very cruel one; but not an injury. It was not a desecration, a sin against faith and trust and everything that was good.

What would the Colonel say, if he knew about Celia? Paul now thought, with a kind of horror, that he might recover, that he might have to know. How would it be possible to tell him? How could anyone be told these things against Celia? The world might find out for itself, Paul thought: he would not say a word on the subject, except to Celia herself. And as to her—of course it would be easier to escape to the other side of the world, and never see her again. It was a temptation; for a short letter, enclosing this mis-sent letter of hers, would be explanation enough; but Paul resolved that he must see her, and hear the truth from herself. Besides, her letter to this other man—Vincent Percival, he felt sure, though without any proof—made it clear that she, for her part, had not the slightest intention of breaking off her engagement. She must know Paul's view of this. She would be glad, no doubt, to be so easily rid of an encumbrance; and

it would not matter to her at all now. That last thought, painful as it was in some ways, had at least the advantage of setting Paul free.

In the midst of these thoughts he fell asleep for about ten minutes, unnoticed by the faithful Di, who had closed her own watchful eyes some time before, thinking that he was to be trusted. A most happy and deceiving little dream ended in a sudden waking; he thought Celia's hand was on his shoulder; but looking up with a start he saw that it was Barty, and remembered everything again.

"Better go and lie down, sir," Barty whispered, proceeding to make up the fire. "I ain't going to bed, and it's no use you sitting here. It's three o'clock, and snowing fast; been snowing for hours. Three to four inches already on the flat, and now it's drifting a bit, as you may hear by the moan o' the wind."

"Is it?" said Paul. "No, I'll sit up, thank you. The Colonel is still asleep. He spoke once; but I think he was wandering."

A flame leaped suddenly up in the dimly-lighted room, the wind gave a louder cry, and a soft shower made the window-panes rattle. Di sat up, turning her head to the bed, and gave a long, low howl. Paul got up, leaving Barty still kneeling on the hearthrug, went across to the bed, and bent over the Colonel in his deep sleep: all these little sounds had not disturbed him.

Paul bent over that motionless figure, and his own heart seemed to stand still.

"Barty—come here!" he said, with a quick terror in his voice.

To this day, Ford the groom is not tired of telling the story of his walk down through the lanes to Wilford that December morning, to fetch Dr. Graves. It seemed useless to attempt riding, for in the hollow lanes near Holm Common, the snow lay deep, and even on the higher ground it balled, so that a horse could hardly get along. Those six miles, that morning, were as bad as twelve. Ford hardly thought the Doctor would come, though the Squire said he must; but in this Ford did injustice to the Doctor's pluck and endurance. He started off in his dog-cart without any hesitation, and to Ford's surprise, his horse, as courageous as himself, struggled on somehow to the foot of the Holm lanes. There he had to leave him at a farm-house, and walked the rest of the way with Ford to the Cottage.

What the Doctor feared, and could not guard against, had happened sooner than he expected; another stroke, coming in the Colonel's sleep, had deepened it into death. No care, no watching could have saved him; Dr. Graves assured Paul earnestly of this when he accused himself of having fallen asleep in his chair.

They were standing together by the fire in the dining-room, having come down from the sad room upstairs. It was nearly eight o'clock; and the dismal light of dawn, white and dreary with snow, was beginning to shine in through the shutters. The Doctor, brisk and rosy from his walk, looked with a certain anxiety at Paul, who stood like a man who was trying to bear a great load of pain.

"Of course, the Colonel was like a father to him," Dr. Graves reflected, and he felt a great deal more sympathy than he showed in his manner, while Paul talked over arrangements with him in an abstracted sort of way.

Paul had everything to do. He was Colonel Ward's sole executor; beyond the legacy to Celia, and two or three small ones, everything was left to him; thus all the affairs seemed to be his, and no friend or relation was likely to come forward with a nearer interest.

After talking for some minutes, Paul sat down and began to write telegrams—to Canon Percival, Mr. Bailey, Mr. Cole, and two or three other people who seemed to occur to him at the moment.

"To-day is Friday. Next Wednesday, you think?" he said, looking up at the Doctor.

"Perhaps you had better consult—Mr. Cole, at any rate," said Dr. Graves, staring at him.

There was an odd impatience in the young man's manner, he thought; he had met with many kinds of grief in his experience, but here was a touch of something new, which puzzled him.

"It is notice enough for him," said Paul, and he went on writing.

"Very imperious," thought the Doctor.

"And there are your friends in Paris," he suggested, as Paul pushed the telegrams away. "Are they at all likely to—come over? Excuse me—but one has to think of everything, difficult as it is."

For a moment Paul sat stooping over the table without saying anything. Then he looked up at the Doctor, and his eyes were rather fierce.

"I must go to Paris," he said quickly. "No use telegraphing; I must go to-day. If I can get there to-night, I may be back to-morrow night. At latest, I will be back on Sunday. Will you give any orders that must be given, Dr. Graves? I shall think it very friendly if you will."

"My dear sir," said Dr. Graves with a queer smile, "do you think this is quite wise? I am ready to do anything I can, of course; but I should have thought a visit to Paris—partly because you are not well, you are highly excited, and tearing about in this fashion is very bad for you—in short, it is unadvisable for many reasons. Why can't you wait till the end of next week?"

"Because I have business in Paris which won't wait till the end of next week," said Paul quickly. He raised his face, which was very pale, and, as he looked up into the Doctor's puzzled countenance, his eyes softened, and he almost smiled. "I didn't consult you, Dr. Graves," he said; "I only asked if you would do my work for me. This is a thing which concerns no one but myself. Bailey will help me, if you won't."

The Doctor was going to speak, but checked himself, smiled a little satirically, and rang the bell.

"I am going to order breakfast," he said. "If you mean to catch the up-train you have no time to lose."

"Now which is the worst, a lovers' quarrel, or the death of an old friend?" thought Dr. Graves half an hour later, as he stood at the gate and watched Paul Romaine striding off across the snow-covered common.

All the clouds had cleared away; the sun, lately risen, was sending beautiful light over a dazzling world. Paul had determined to walk all the way to the station, in spite of Ford's remonstrances.

Dr. Graves need not have been quite so cynical. As the young fellow plunged through the deep track in the hollow lane, with his face to the rosy radiance of the east, his thoughts had not gone before him to Paris, but had stayed behind in that low, quiet, darkened room, where lonely Di lay watching her dear master. Where was the Colonel now? In the "land o' the leal," Paul thought, wherever that may be; in that very distant country where nothing selfish, or cruel, or false can ever find its way.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

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SATURDAY, MAY 5, 1888.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XX. CONGRATULATIONS.

MAY was not allowed to forget for a moment her new happiness wherever she went, for the news was scattered broadcast through the parish by the exultant Mrs. Beresford. Miss Hick sent three times for May, her notes growing in peremptoriness from positive to superlative; and, if the third and most agonisingly urgent of these summonses had been disregarded, the old lady might have stepped down from her pillar, like a female Saint Simeon, and amazed the village by the miracle of her march through it to the Vicarage.

However, May went at last, not without a nauseating repulsion from what she knew to be in store for her. How many times had Miss Hick predicted, and she repudiated, this odious engagement. And now she was to be rallied upon her slyness and insincerity, artfulness and success!

Nor was she without, on her way, some foretaste of what was in store for her. Among other officious congratulators she encountered dear old Enoch Lumb, the choir-master.

"Eh, Miss May, aw'm fain to see thee, aw ham that. It's nobbut this moment aw hed a fratch wi' Ike Seed abaht thee. He said thee mother telled him tha wor bahn to wed yon kippered herrin' that's stayin' wi' ye. 'Nay,' aw says; 'Miss May is noan soa fast* as that,' aw says; 'shoo can choose her chap abaht† waitin' while any chap may choose her,'"

"But it's true, Enoch," May answered

hurriedly, to prevent her old friend saying more that he might be sorry for afterward.

But Enoch was not taken aback in the very least. He seemed quite unconscious of the offensiveness of his description of May's fiancé as "a kippered herrin'"—When May said timidly, "But it's true, Enoch," he cried: "Nay for sewer! Aw am capped, aw ham that. But he's a deal o' brass, aw reckon?" he said, interrogatively.

"I really don't know."

"He mun hev sommut," Enoch rejoined, without an intention or an idea of offence. "Weel, lass, marriage is nobbut buyin' a pig i' a poke—yo' know nowt o' t' bargain till yo' canna goa back on it. But a bit o' brass is a bit o' brass, whoiver brings it; an' a gooise wi' golden eggs is better nor a gooise wi' fine feathers."

Having thus, as he entirely believed, made polite amends for his incredulity about the report of the engagement, Enoch took a cheerful leave of his favourite.

Thenceforth, whenever he heard the engagement canvassed—and there was hardly anything else talked of in the village for days—Enoch would stand up stoutly for it as an excellent arrangement.

"It brades o'* Briggs Brothers' partnership wi' Sammy Slicer," he said. "Sammy browt t' brains an' t' Briggs t' brass into t' consarn. Miss May has beauty an' sinse eneu', an' yon lad brass eneu', for baith."

Miss Hick, on the other hand, need ed no special pleading to reconcile herself or others to this brilliant engagement. When poor May, more mortified and indisposed for the visit than ever after her encounter with Enoch, made her slow way to the

* "Fast," i.e. hard-up.

† "Abaht," i.e. without.

* "Brades o'," i.e. is like. Google

house, she was prepared before she entered it for what was in store for her, by the battery of nods, winks, and smiles poured upon her through the window by the old lady.

When May was ushered into the room, Miss Hick drew her face down to her and kissed her again and again with great effusiveness.

"What did I tell you, my dear? And what did you tell me, Slyboots? 'There was not one single word of truth in it!' To be sure not; no girl ever thinks of a man, or thinks that he is thinking of her until he proposes! But come, sit down, and tell me all about it, and I'll forgive you. When was it? You must bring him to see me. When was it? I hear such stories of Sir George, and his wealth, and his position, and he an only son! He is, isn't he? Do sit down, dear, and tell me all about it. Twelve thousand pounds a year, they say! You'll cut us all, then; we must make the most of you while we have you—Lady Gower!"

As May made no response in either words or smiles, Miss Hicks hurried on to say: "There hasn't been a quarrel! My dear, it's just the best thing that could happen. Of course, you had a quarrel; you ought to have a quarrel once a-week at least. But tell me about it. He was jealous of Mr. Spratt? Now wasn't he? Do tell me about it. It's just the very best thing that could have happened, and it's a mercy there's a curate—even Mr. Spratt—to show him you're not going a-begging."

This providential view of Mr. Spratt made May smile, for it was the first time since her own disappointment that Miss Hick found an intelligible place for a curate in the scheme of a beneficent Providence.

"I knew it!" cried the old lady triumphantly, at sight of May's smile. "Sit down and tell me all about it."

"There's nothing to tell, Miss Hick," May answered, as she sat down resignedly. "Nothing that you don't know already."

"But I know nothing, my dear, except that you're engaged."

"Well, that's all there is to know," May said wearily.

"If that were all, my dear, you wouldn't look as if the world had come to an end."

"But it is all, really."

"Then it's a letter from Sir George disapproving of the engagement!" Miss Hick cried eagerly, after a moment's pause for thought.

"I haven't heard yet of it," May replied shortly.

Whereupon Miss Hick reverted to her original idea of a quarrel, which was not henceforth to be got out of her head.

"My dear, you can't deceive me," she said at last. "How many times did you tell me that you had no idea of each other! And now——! But you wouldn't trust me then, and you won't now; as if I should tell any one!"

This suggestion that May's denials were proved to be worthless nettled her in her present mood, through being as unanswerable as it was offensive. Besides, she was glad of an excuse to cut short her visit before Miss Hick had begun to pump her in real earnest. Accordingly she rose suddenly, and said with a pettishness surprising from her:

"If you won't believe me, Miss Hick, I cannot help it."

And in spite of the old lady's desperate protestations and adjurations to her to stay and tell her at least everything about the engagement, May escaped from the house.

Though Miss Hick felt that some excuse was to be made for a girl in her first love quarrel, she was much hurt and aggrieved by the escape from her web of so succulent a prey without the extraction of more gossip. Of this, however, she made so much, that before many hours a hundred versions of the affair were all over the village; and of these a dozen, at least, were communicated with Yorkshire frankness to the Vicar.

As Mr. Spratt figured in all these as the Cassio of the tragedy, the Vicar had little doubt at first about the source of the scandal being Miss Hick. Hearing it, however, on all sides, he began to have his assurance shaken by the universality and unanimity of the reports, and hurried home to ascertain the truth.

When he reached the Vicarage, Mrs. Beresford met him at the door with a version of the story that had just come to her ears. She hurried him into the study and disclosed her news in great agitation.

"Did you hear it from herself?" asked the Vicar.

"No; she has not returned yet; but every one is talking of it."

"'Every one' means only one—whoever set the ball rolling to begin with. May can't have told every one, or any one, if she hasn't told you or me."

"She doesn't speak about it; she's too

proud; but you can read it in her face. She's unhappy about something, and it can only be about that."

"If she's too proud to speak of it to you or me, she's not likely to tell it to all the village."

"But he; he may have said something."

"Well, it's only a love quarrel, if it's a quarrel at all. The hotter love is, the surer you may be of quarrels. They come of heat, like thunderstorms; and the air is all the sweeter after them."

"But if he should go away in a huff, she will lose him altogether!"

"There's little chance of that, I fear."

"You wish it broken off!"

"I wish it had never come about. He's —; but there's no use going over it all again."

"I can't imagine what you've got against the poor lad. I am sure there never was any one so amiable, and inoffensive, and easy to please; but it would have been the same no matter who she chose, for it's nothing but jealousy," cried Mrs. Beresford.

"So I understood you to say last night, and I think we may take it 'as read' to-day," the Vicar said, with the impatience of weariness and worry.

"But what have you to say against him?" Mrs. Beresford asked triumphantly for the hundredth time.

"Nothing more, my dear."

Hereon, Mrs. Beresford sang over again Gower's merits, using, with Homeric iteration, the same precise epithets of eulogium she had applied to him twenty times already.

"She couldn't have done better if she had been the belle of a London season; and now she's gone and quarrelled with him, and she'll be too proud to make it up, and he'll go off and see some one else," she cried tearfully.

"You have described an ideal suitor."

"You know as well as I do that it's her fault altogether. He just worshipped and waited on her like a dog, and she goes and treats him like a dog till he can stand it no longer."

"After all, my dear, you are more sure that the quarrel was of her making, than that there has been a quarrel at all"—a humorous bull, which pretty precisely expressed Mrs. Beresford's state of mind.

"What nonsense, George! If there hasn't been a quarrel, how could she have made one? But, of course, you always take her side."

"I merely suggested that there may have

been no quarrel for us to quarrel over, my dear."

"Then why should every one be talking of it, and she looking like a ghost?" etc.,

Hardly had Mrs. Beresford quitted the study, when the Vicar heard May's light step crossing the hall. Opening the study door he called her to him, and they re-entered the room together.

"There's nothing wrong, dear?" he asked, laying his hands lovingly upon her shoulders and looking down with yearning anxiety into her pale face.

"Wrong? No, father," she stammered guiltily with flushed face, for she feared that her father had got some clue to Fred's secret.

"No—no quarrel between you and Mr. Gower?" asked her father, hesitatively, ashamed of forcing her confidence.

"No," May cried, amazed and relieved. "Who—oh, Miss Hick!" she interrupted herself to exclaim. "I called this morning, and she insisted that there had been a quarrel in spite of my denials."

"That woman's mouth's an open sepulchre, and infects the whole village," the Vicar cried wrathfully.

"She doesn't mean to make mischief, and I'm not sure that she makes much, as no one minds her."

"She has made the whole place believe in this quarrel."

"I don't think it matters much," May replied fretfully, and then hastened away from the subject. "I have seen Mr. Sugden about the wall for the new playground, and——"

"What on earth put it into her head that there had been a quarrel?" her father interrupted her to ask.

"Oh, I don't know. She said I looked like a quarrel; she's always imagining things."

"Your mother also thinks you look unhappy, dear!" he said timidly and interrogatively, looking up at her—for he was now seated—with a troubled expression of doubt and anxiety.

"I've had a headache," she answered confusedly.

"Are you quite sure you're happy in this engagement, dear?"

"I'm afraid you don't approve of it, father?" she answered.

She had shifted her position so as to stand behind him, with her arm round his neck, and her cheek resting on his head.

"That would only mean, dear, that I was not sure of your being happy in it."

"I thought that, perhaps, you disliked him," she answered evasively.

"Disliked him? Certainly not! I don't think any one could dislike him."

To May it sounded as though he had so emphasised "dislike" as to suggest "despise." However, she made haste away from the subject.

"I am so glad you don't disapprove of it, father. But, about that wall, Mr. Sugden offers to pay half the expense."

"That is very generous of him," he answered mechanically, his mind not being behind his words. Then, after a pause, he added in a low, diffident, and even timid tone: "May, if your heart is not in this engagement, you ought to escape from it at once."

Poor May's finessing faculty was feeble at best, but with her father it seemed to fail her altogether. It was impossible for him to suppose her interest in the playground-wall to be deeper than her interest in her engagement, or even in his view of her engagement.

"But why should you think I—I repent of it, father?"

"You do not seem happy about it, dear."

"I wasn't sure of your approval, father," she answered, falling feebly back on her former evasion.

"But are you sure, dear, of your own?" he asked point-blank, turning his head so as to look inquiringly and wistfully up into her face.

She flushed to the roots of her hair as she answered with eyes downcast:

"Yes, father."

"Then you may be sure of mine, dear," he said almost with a sigh, as he drew down her face to his to kiss it tenderly.

His tone left no doubt at all in May's guilty mind that he did not, and could not, believe her.

It is surprising how much deeper, even to a girl so high-minded as May, the humiliation of a downright falsehood seems, when it is thought to be seen through. But it's being seen through, besides, mortified May miserably, with the conviction that she had lost her father's respect, which, next to his love, was dearer to her than anything else in the world. What could he think of her engagement to a man for whom he perceived plainly that she had no love? Only that she was selling herself for position and wealth.

This was, indeed, what every one thought of her engagement; but her

father's misunderstanding of her was immeasurably more bitter than that of all others put together. She had lost his respect, and she was losing her own. For more humiliating a hundred times than even her father's contempt was her self-contempt in having to submit to Gower's love-making. In this matter May was, what most girls are supposed to be, nice to a shrinking and even shuddering fastidiousness.

To May's innate and quivering modesty a tête-à-tête with Gower, in which she had to submit only to the most timid and tentative advances of love, was inexpressibly repulsive. She could not conceive how any consideration of rank or wealth could induce a girl to endure such advances of unreturned love. Certainly nothing short of Fred's redemption from suicide would have prevailed upon her to submit to them; and she sometimes had good reason to doubt whether her self-sacrifice had so saved Fred.

It was not the least of her mortifications to hear this young gentleman speak of her engagement as a good thing of his doing! He really seemed sometimes to imagine himself that May was rather in his debt than he in hers through this engagement; and the most galling of all the congratulations thrust on her were Fred's flippant assurances that she was just the luckiest girl in the world.

"You should see his place, Em—one of the finest seats in the county. And the shooting! There isn't better in England."

For the first time in her life May perceived a want in the character of her idolised brother, and began to have a dim understanding of her father's feeling towards Fred.

It is an odd thing that, during this time of mortifying congratulations, no one, not to say in the village but in the Vicarage, not her own father even, had the instinctive inkling of May's real feelings and position that Con seemed to have. Con was probably helped to this comprehension of the case as much by his instinctive dislike and contempt for Gower as by his worship of May. Anyhow, he was stubbornly convinced that May had accepted the youth under drastic compulsion of some kind—probably that of her brother, for whom Con had small esteem, since the engagement dated from Fred's return home.

What hold Gower had upon Fred Con could not guess; but he did guess that it

was through some hold of the kind Fred was brought to bring such pressure on May as forced her into an odious engagement, for there was, he knew, nothing that she would not do for her idolised brother.

Con, having this idea fixed firmly in his head, had the delicacy to refrain from canvassing the engagement with others, or alluding to it with May. When Mrs. Barraclough, athirst for gossip, intercepted him on his way home to say interrogatively:

"Yo're bahn to have a weddin' up yonder, aw reckon?"

He answered innocently:

"Ah thin, where?"

"At t' Vicarage. Miss May is keepin' coompany wi' yon Gower, they tell me."

"Who tould ye?"

"Nay, it's talk o' t' whole place, mun."

"Hear that now!"

"An' he's a barrownight, or sommut i' Parleyment, an' fair stinks o' brass; an' there'll be sich an a stir as niver was at t' weddin'," cried Mrs. Barraclough, her sentences tumbling breathlessly over each other.

"Ay, begor, ye know all about it," Con cried sarcastically. "A lot of lasses at the mill, whose tongues worrk faster nor their fingers, think of nothing all the day through but marriage; though divil a bit nearer they can get to it themselves wid all their thinkin'!"

"Nay, it's noan t' lasses' clack, 'mun; it wor nobbut this forenoon — nay, aw'm storyin'; it wor when ahr Johnny comed through schooil at noonin, Mrs. Rogers says to me, shoo says, 'There's gran' news o' Miss May,' shoo says, 'aw've just heeard through Polly Pearson, who had it through Mrs. Bereaford hersen' that——'"

"Sure, it's wastin' the blessed night ye are, wid me, whin there's thim in Leeds, I'll be bound, that hasn't hearrd yet what Mrs. Rogers, an' Mrs. Podgers, an' Mrs. Todgers says of yere Mimbber of Parleyment! A pack of geese screechin' an' athretchin' their long necks afther a strange cur on the common!"

So saying, Con strode off, leaving Mrs. Barraclough too breathless with amazement to reply till he was beyond earshot of her voluble and virulent retort.

Con behaved to May as though she were in some deep trouble needing delicate consideration. He alone, of the whole household and village, made no allusion to her engagement in his talks with her, unless a grisly anecdote he told her of a

Leeds man, "who had sould his mother's corpse to the docthers, and thanked God that he had a mother to sell," might be taken as a reference to Fred's callous sale and sacrifice of his sister to Gower. This at least was the association of ideas in Con's own mind.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

MAY.

THE Romans called this month *Maius*, a name given to it by Romulus, out of respect to the nobles and senators of the city, who were called *Maiores*, and to whom it was dedicated as June was to the younger people. Others derive the name from *Maia*, the mother of Mercury, who was worshipped on the first day; but it is not impossible that *Maia* and her day were afterthoughts, when the real origin of the name of May was forgotten. May was under the protection of Apollo; and in it, also, the Romans kept the festival of the *Bona Dea*. Notwithstanding this, it was regarded as a bad month in which to contract matrimonial engagements. The Saxons called the month "*tri milchi*," because they began to milk their cows thrice daily.

May has been apostrophised under innumerable titles, and poets have delighted in describing it as a beautiful maiden clothed in sunshine, and scattering flowers on the earth, while she dances to the music of birds and brooks. Macarthy declares that

The summer is returning,
Golden mornings, purple evenings,
Come to glad the earth once more.
Nature from her long sojourning
In the winter house of mourning,
With the light of hope outpeeping
From the eyes that late were weeping,
Cometh dancing o'er the waters
To our distant shore.

This, however, was before May became as fickle as the proverbial maiden, and, instead of gladdening our lives with sunshine, damped our spirits, and our feet at the same time, with sodden snow and slush. It is not necessary that the month should be particularly warm, for if weather saws go for anything, a cold May is exceeding beneficial to agriculturists:

A cold May and windy
Makes a full barn and a findy.

On the other hand, a hot May is as bad as an epidemic of fever, seeing that it makes a fat churchyard. "A windy May makes a fair year," while

A dry May and a dripping June,
Brings all things into tune.

"A May flood," it is further said, "never did good"; and we are warned seriously to "ne'er cast a clout till May be out," and as a further word of advice, "Don't put off your great-coat in May." "A swarm of bees in May," is said to be "worth a load of hay," and

Mists in May, heat in June,
Makes the harvest come right soon.

I have already said that May was formerly regarded as an unlucky month, a belief which still exists with more or less tenacity. The "dies mala" are fifth, sixth, seventh, fifteenth and twentieth; and the precious stone to be worn in order to counteract the evil influences was the agate, which was credited with causing its wearer to be invincible in all feats of strength, to ensure long life, health, and prosperity, and was generally found in every one's possession.

Who first beholds the light of day
In spring's sweet flowery month of May,
And wears an emerald all her life,
Shall be a loved and happy wife.

The first of May was formerly the most popular festival of the year, and its advent was eagerly looked forward to by amorous swains and boy sweethearts with the greatest eagerness. The festivities of the day are undoubtedly relics of the Floralia of the Romans, and the worship of Baal, or the Sun, by the Celtic nations.

The first day of the month is a double Saint's Day, dedicated to Saints Philip and James the Less. Wither tells us that: "This day is celebrated to the honour of God and the Christian memorial of the two blessed Apostles, Philip and James, at which time the Church taketh occasion to offer to our remembrance such mysteries as Christ delivered unto them, that we might the oftener consider them, receive further instruction concerning them, and praise God, both for such His favours and for those instruments of His glory."

May the third is again a double festival, being dedicated to the "Invention of the Cross," and Saint Joseph. This day was especially to be avoided for marriages; indeed, it is said that the Councils and Synods of the Church forbade it altogether. It was also observed as a solemn fast.

May the sixth is Rogation Sunday, a name said to have been derived from the Latin "rogare," to beseech, and the Rogation days were those immediately preceding Ascension Day. Regarding this period, Blount says: "Rogation week is always the next but one before Whit Sunday, and is so called because on Monday, Tuesday,

and Wednesday of that week, Rogation and Litanies were used; and fasting, or at least abstinence, then enjoined by the Church on all persons, not only for a devout preparation to the feast of Christ's glorious Ascension, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost shortly after, but also to request and supplicate the blessing of God upon the fruits of the earth. And in this respect the solemnisation of matrimony is forbidden from the first day of the said week till Trinity Sunday. The Dutch call it Cruys Week (Cross Week), and it is so called in some parts of England, because of old—as still amongst the Roman Catholics—when the priests went in procession this week the cross was carried before them. In the Inns of Court it is called Grass Week, because the commons of that week consist much of salads, hard eggs, and green sauce, upon some of the days. The feasts of the old Romans, called Robigalia and Ambarvalia did, in their heathenish way, somewhat resemble these institutions, and were kept in May, in honour of Robigus."

In the third century, extraordinary prayers, and supplications, and rigorous fastings were appointed and continued without intermission until the Reformation, when they were abolished. In the year 469, the Archbishop of Vienne in Dauphiné ordered Litanies and supplications to be said for deliverance from earthquakes, by which his city had been much injured.

In the town of Shaftesbury, on Rogation Monday, there used to be a custom known as the "procession of the Bezant." This was continued down to the year 1830, when it ceased. It is supposed that originally the Bezant was a coin of the value of nine shillings, paid annually to the lord of the manor of Mitcombe, for a supply of water provided by him. When this ceased, a trophy, composed of ribbons, flowers, feathers, and the like, and decorated with articles of value lent for the occasion, was substituted, and instead of proceeding to the house of the lord of the manor, the holiday makers perambulated the parish.

May tenth is this year Ascension Day or Holy Thursday, when the ancient custom of "beating the bounds" was formerly observed with much ceremony, and is still kept up, though shorn of all its importance. This beating was originally established to secure the rights of the Vicar of the parish, and was held to be a proof of the extent of the district over which he held spiritual control. On such occasions the boys attending the National School, headed by the

beadle and churchwardens, and sometimes accompanied by the Vicar and school-master, were drawn up in processional order and supplied with willow canes. When all was ready they started off, and beat the ground dividing the several parishes one from another. In some cases it was necessary to pass through shops and private houses, the walls of which they beat under directions from their leader. At certain points boys were "bumped," to impress upon their minds as long as they lived, that such a spot was in a particular parish. Afterwards they were regaled with milk and buns as a reward for their exertions. The introduction of fences and boundary walls rendered this custom superfluous, though I believe it is still kept up in places. A writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine," volume xi., page 719, says: "I think the day before Holy Thursday all the clergy, attended by the singing men and boys of the choir, perambulate the town (Ripon) in their canonicals, singing hymns, and the blue-coat charity boys follow singing, with green boughs in their hands." Wither, in his "Emblems" (1667) says:

That every man might keep his own possessions,
Our fathers used, in reverent processions,
With zealous prayers, and such a praiseful cheer,
To walke the parish limits once a year;
And well known markes (which sacrilegious hands
Now cut or breake) so bordered out their lands,
That everyone distinctly knew his owne;
And many brawls, now rife, were then unknowne.

On this day at Newcastle-on-Tyne, the municipal authorities had a custom of sailing up the river in barges, from a place known as Sparrow Hawk to Hedwin streams, above Newcastle, in order to assert their right to the river and the soil thereof. The procession on the water was very gay, and the day known as "Barge Day," was observed as a general holiday.

I have seen it stated that Welsh quarrymen will not work on Ascension Day, on the ground that a fatal accident will inevitably cut off those who go to their daily labour as usual. This very strange and remarkable superstition is, I believe, shared by thousands of Welsh people.

May the nineteenth brings round Saint Dunstan's Day. Saint Dunstan, the nipper of the devil's nose, was born somewhere about the year 924 A.D., at Glastonbury, where it is supposed the remains of King Arthur, Joseph of Arimathea, and Saint Patrick lie buried within the sacred precincts of the Abbey.

From an early age Dunstan betrayed

extraordinary mental capabilities. Through the influence of his uncle, Elphage the Bald, Bishop of Winchester, he was induced to take Holy Orders. He joined the Order of Saint Benedict, and returned to his native village, where he built a small cell, and lived the life of an anchorite. It was while living and praying here that Saint Dunstan was greatly annoyed by the constant visits of the Evil One, till one day he heated a pair of pincers red hot, and nipped the nose of his disagreeable visitor until he had extorted from him a promise never to come again. The neighbours of the holy man are said to have been greatly startled by the terrible cries of Satan. In 1749 there was at Mayfield, where the holy man subsequently lived, the pair of tongs which were applied to the devil's nose.

By steps Dunstan rose, until eventually he became Archbishop of Canterbury, and Minister of Edward, for whom he really ruled. He is said to have performed numerous miracles, amongst them being that of making the image on a crucifix speak—a not very difficult feat in these days of professional ventriloquism.

On the same day was formerly held the "Feast of the Ghosts." As may, perhaps, be known to many readers, the ancients believed that every person was possessed of three spirits, the "manes," the "spiritus," and the "umbra." The first went down to the infernal regions, the second ascended to the skies, and the third hovered about the tomb. They also ascribed two genii to every person, a black one and a white one. On the third of the Ides the Romans had a feast called Feralis, in honour of the ghosts, and another on the nineteenth of May to pacify the manes of the dead, and reverence the hobgoblins. Nearly every nation, from the rudest to the most enlightened, has at one time or another paid some regard to ghosts, and the belief in their appearance still exists to a wider extent than is generally known.

The twenty-third, twenty-fifth, and twenty-sixth are again Ember Days, the observance of which was referred to in the June article.

May the twenty-second is the anniversary of the first creation of Baronets in 1611, by James the First. The King, wanting money, to be expended in Ireland, applied to the Earl of Salisbury, who suggested the creation of two hundred Baronets, each of whom should pay a thousand pounds for the privilege and honour. The King expressed doubt as to the

manner in which this new Order would be received by the great body of gentry.

"Tush, sire," the Earl replied, "you want the money; it will do you good, and the honour will do the gentry very little harm."

It was a strict condition that each candidate for the title should be worth a thousand pounds per year, and also that the title should die with him. As aspirants for the honour were not too numerous, this latter clause was removed, and the title was made heritable.

The first Baronet was Sir Nicholas Bacon, whose successor is styled "Primus Baronetorum Angliæ." The reason the sum was fixed at a thousand pounds was that it would maintain thirty soldiers each in the province of Ulster for three years, at eighteenpence per day.

May the twenty-ninth is the anniversary of the Restoration of King Charles, and was once observed as a general holiday, and a spray of oak as a badge of loyalty was worn in the hat. In country places the innkeepers used to hang out of their windows large branches of oak, while boys carrying sprays used to bid defiance to their schoolmasters in these words:

The twenty-ninth of May is Royal Oak day,
If you don't give us a holiday, we'll all run away.

Once the holiday had been obtained, the lads used to rush off, seeking stinging-nettles, with which they punished other juveniles who failed on demand to "show you oak."

In the North of England boys formerly had a somewhat taunting rhyme, which they sang on meeting persons not decorated with oak leaves:

Royal Oak,
The Whigs to provoke—

which was retorted to by other lads who wore plane leaves:

Plane tree leaves;
The church folks are thieves.

Doubtless this was a relic of the very bitter feelings which existed between the Royalists and Puritans, when the preachers amongst the latter were compelled to vacate the Church livings they had usurped during the Commonwealth.

The custom of holding a show, or procession of guilds, was for almost hundreds of years kept up in Shrewsbury, and only ceased in the year 1861. The day on which it was held was the second Monday after Trinity Sunday, and the place, the large space of high ground known as Kingsland. Here were erected the "arbours,"

or halls of the various guilds or trades in the ancient town of Shrewsbury. The halls were built of wood, with stone gateways, that of the Cordwainers being the most imposing, and bearing the date 1679. The show was really a fair at one time, but gradually developed into a gala, as the necessity for holding a fair ceased to exist. The companies or trades that took part in the procession were the "Taylors," "Shoemakers," "Shearmen," "Barbers," "Chirurgeons," "Weavers," "Bricklayers, Carpenters and Joiners," "Hatters, and Cabinet Makers," "Bakers," "Skinners and Glovers," "Butchers," "Smiths," "Saddlers," and "Printers and Painters." These each had their arbour, where, on the arrival of the company, after parading the town in character, dancing and feasting took place. When the festival ended in 1861, seven of these arbours were still standing. I may here mention that of the collation provided by each guild, the Mayor and Corporation were expected to partake. It is quite possible that within a very few years all traces of this custom will have been swept away, as Kingsland is rapidly being built over.

May the thirtieth, the last special day I have to note in "All the Year Round," is the anniversary of the death of that mystical monarch, King Arthur, whose name is chiefly associated with an Order of Knighthood, noted for its virtue and a round table. The only knowledge we possess of this King is that contained in the writings of Merlin, the Welsh wizard.

AN UNNOTICED INCIDENT.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

A BITTER wind was driving the sleet fiercely round all the corners, as Mrs. Railton, turning out of Hammersmith Road, neared her own door. She was carrying a heavy parcel by the string; her feet were wet, her eyes aching with the cold, and the sleet, which had found the weak place between her bonnet and her cloak, would probably give her a very bad sore throat; but Mrs. Railton was not thinking of these things. She was thinking of summer, one summer fifteen years ago. How bright it had been, and how hot, everywhere but in the wood, and even there the breezes had been faint and warm! What wonderful shapes the great patches of light that fell through the outspread arms of the great tall trees had taken!

What glorious colours had lain among the shadows where the foxgloves and thunder-flowers grew in crowds! Ah, that was a pleasant place, and she had stood there leaning against a willow by the river, looking up eagerly into the handsome, eager young face bent down to her.

She almost heard her own voice saying: "I am not fit to be your wife, Donald. I am so stupid and so ignorant."

And in answer he had told her that clever men always hated clever women, and that her sweet childishness, her naïveté, and simplicity were dearer to him than all the wisdom in the world. Ah! those were pleasant times, and that was the happiest day of all her life, clouded perhaps by a passing fear as she listened to this new lover that "Cousin Dennis" might be disappointed; but the cloud only stayed for a moment, for she did not know then how to be unhappy—nothing had ever happened in her life to teach her.

Now all these memories were very pleasant, but they were very unwise. It would have been much wiser of Mrs. Railton to think of the washing-bills and the water-rate, or to plan how she might best disguise the long tear in Kate's ulster and make it down to fit Jane; but then, as her lover had joyously pointed out long ago, Mrs. Railton was not wise, but rather the reverse, and, unfortunately, the qualities which had been so charming to the lover then, only served to irritate the husband now.

Indeed, it is an unfortunate fact that the men who are the readiest to dispense with cleverness in a pretty girl of seventeen, are the most intolerant of the want of it in a wife of thirty, telling the poor wife—if they happen to meet with a clever girl who will notice them at all—what a relief it is to talk to a woman with a mind!

This is puzzling, and bewilders the poor wives as to what is really expected of them, for it is not every one who can regulate herself to the perfect medium: that is, be clever enough to appreciate her husband, but not clever enough to criticise him.

Mrs. Railton rang the bell, and waited while the one harassed-looking servant came up from the dim regions below. She heard the noise of the family in the sitting-room at tea. They were in the habit of opening the door to each other, but it did not occur to them to disturb themselves for their mother. Father never did, and why should they? When Mrs. Railton

entered the room, Kate said, "Are you wet?" and Jack said, "Are you hungry?" and then they went back to their previous subject of noisy discussion.

There are few things that give one a more unpleasant shock than to come home and find one's place filled, one's wants forgotten. It gives one a foretaste of death, faint, perhaps, but unpleasant. Mrs. Railton looked round the table; no one made way for her. Her husband looked up and said crossly:

"I wish you would try not to be late, Lisa, it sets such a bad example to the children."

Kate rose from the head of the table, saying:

"You will have to send for more tea, this is finished."

But neither of them seemed to expect an answer, so Mrs. Railton gave none. She rang the bell, and while the harassed servant was bringing up some tepid tea and a semi-raw chop, pulled off her damp gloves, and found that her finger, which had been passed under the string of the parcel of books, was bruised and cut. She had not noticed this while her hands were so cold, but it began to ache and smart as she held her fingers to the fire.

Mr. Railton went to his arm-chair and lit his pipe; the children went to the other end of the room and discussed their lessons in undertones. Mrs. Railton attacked her comfortless tea. She was cold, and tired, and miserable, and longed, foolishly, for a little sympathy; so she asked for some.

"I have hurt my finger," she said.

"How did you do it?" said Jane, looking up from her books; but then, Jane was always glad of an excuse to look up from her books, so her sympathy did not count for much.

"I was carrying these books for your father, and I never noticed that the string was cutting my finger because my hand was so cold. Those law books are so heavy."

"You should have changed to another finger," said Kate, practically. She was a handsome, clever girl, very like her father, and was certainly far too wise ever to hurt herself by doing things for other people.

"Did you say you hurt yourself? Where are the books, by the way?" said Mr. Railton. "There! Oh, thank you." Then, as he looked at them he added, fretfully: "They are all wrong; just as I might have expected."

"Are they really wrong, Donald? Oh,

what a pity! I was so afraid of making mistakes that I gave the list you wrote out to the librarian, and those are what he gave me. I am so sorry they are wrong."

"I might have expected it," muttered Mr. Railton crossly. "I wish I had gone myself, here's a whole evening wasted. I came home early on purpose to read. I might just as well have been at the office."

"I am so sorry," repeated poor little Lisa.

"So am I," he said sharply, and leaned moodily against the mantel-piece.

"Are you quite sure they are all wrong, Donald?"

"It is maddening to have a whole evening wasted when I have so few free," said Mr. Railton, testily, ignoring her question. "Since I can't read, I may as well go out. Kate, if you can manage to dress in twenty minutes I will take you to the theatre."

Kate gladly threw aside her books and ran upstairs. Jane began a struggle with George for the French dictionary. Mrs. Railton was not very much disturbed. She was accustomed to be slighted; but she made a weak protest.

"You should not take her from her lessons, Donald."

"She can look after her lessons herself. She is never behindhand in her work."

"You promised to take me one evening, and I think——"

"Oh, that's what you mean, is it, by your anxiety about her lessons? Paul, go upstairs and tell your sister to come back to her books. Your mother wishes to go instead of her."

Paul, a chubby, stolid boy of eight or nine—considered the clever one of the family because he made least noise—only opened his mouth, and waited. He felt satire in his father's tone, and knew he should not have to go on that errand. Poor Lisa felt more miserable than ever. She knew she was being wronged, but she did not know how to state her case.

"I am much too tired to go out," she said.

"Then you needn't spoil my pleasure by making me think you want to," snapped her husband.

Lisa knew he was not at all likely to disturb his enjoyment by any thoughts of her; but she was not sharp enough to say so, which was just as well, perhaps. Kate called at that instant to know if she might borrow her mother's corals, and Lisa went upstairs to get them for her, and see that she was well wrapped up.

Presently a cab was whistled for, and the father and daughter drove off.

The Railtons were in tolerably easy circumstances. The children went to good schools, and Mr. Railton could have afforded a better house and more servants, if he had not preferred to save in that respect, and spend the money in ways pleasanter to himself. If any one had suggested that he ought to make life pleasanter to his wife, he would have regarded such an idea as sentimental nonsense, declaring that he was an exceedingly good husband, and that Lisa had everything she wanted; and as for house-work, that was a woman's duty. "Want pleasure, indeed! A married woman ought not to want pleasure; she ought to stand aside at her age, and let her girls have the pleasure." A precept, by the way, he did not dream of applying to himself.

Donald Railton was a lawyer—getting on fast, and meaning to get on much faster; but, unfortunately, in his progress he had left the eager lover, who assured sweet little Lisa Grey that her simplicity was the very quality for which he had chosen her, so far in the past, that now he had not even patience left for his jaded, spiritless wife, and much preferred the company of his sharp, animated daughter, who could understand him, and who never looked in his eyes with the reproachful wistfulness that sometimes made his wife's face so irritating.

Mrs. Railton had been sitting by the fire about half-an-hour, engaged in making a new petticoat for Kate, when the door-bell rang, and the harassed maid appeared announcing:

"A gentleman, ma'am. Shall I show him in the drawing-room, or in here?"

"Why, in here, of course," said a cheery voice; and next a tall, bearded, bronzed stranger stood in the doorway.

"Cousin Dennis!"

"Cousin Lisa!"

"Oh, Dennis; how tall you have grown!"

"My faith, Lisa; how thin you are!"

And these greetings over, Cousin Dennis West came forward into the room and spoke to the children, seated himself by the fire, and plunged into conversation.

"Tell me all about everything," he began. "How is Railton? Getting on like a house on fire, I suppose; and in a fair way to become Attorney-General, or something equally distinguished. And how are you, Lisa? You are as pretty as

ever. May a cousin say that, now you are a dignified matron? I remember fifteen years ago, you refused to sing duets with me for a week, because I said something like that."

Mrs. Railton was not so pretty as she was fifteen years ago; but if Cousin Dennis thought so, it was pleasant that he should say so in that frank, brotherly tone. She asked what he had been doing all these years.

"Making money, dear; such a lot of money, quite a fortune; and I have come to London to invest it. I am going to ask your husband's advice—he knows everything; he always did know everything. I say, Lisa, do you remember Larne Woods fifteen years ago?"

Did she not? Had she not been thinking of it only that evening; though this dear kind Cousin Dennis had held but a small place in her thoughts.

"What a cub I was then!" went on Cousin Dennis. "And how Railton sat on me, and you, too! You despised me because I was three months younger than you, and very properly too. What an exhibition I made of myself, and how you must have laughed at me!"

"I was so young," said Lisa, for she could not deny having joined in Railton's laughter, though in her heart she had been sorry for the poor, petulant boy, who had taken her engagement to the handsome young lawyer so bitterly to heart.

"Yes," laughed Dennis, "I was three months your junior; that was the offence. You called it a year—you remember—because your seventeenth birthday had passed a week before, and I was still only sixteen. But it is only three months, you know. Well, Lisa, you will be glad to hear that I very soon got over my disappointment; indeed, I have had a good many more since. I say, Lisa, now I look at you again, you don't look half so well as I thought you did. Have you been ill?"

It was true. Now the flush of pleasure and surprise had faded from her face, she looked, as she generally did, ill and worn. She murmured something about being overtired this afternoon.

"You are indeed, I can see," he said, "and you are sitting in an uncomfortable chair all this while." He jumped up and looked round the room. "Here, youngster, move out of that," and disturbing the stolid Paul from a low folding-chair, he brought it round to the fire, installed Lisa in it, brought her a footstool and a screen, and

then, reseating himself, went on pouring out reminiscences, while Paul stood by with his mouth wider open than ever.

Their talk was all about the time long ago when Lisa was a merry, light-hearted girl, the happiest in a happy home, with father, mother, brothers, and cousin all ready to pet her; when life seemed one long holiday, and time was reckoned by skating expeditions, and hay-making, and nut-gathering.

"And the piano, Lisa—the dear, old piano. Do you remember our duets on it? Can you still play the barrel-organ with three notes missing? Do you remember 'Garyowen'?—our own arrangement when I played the air down in the bass, and we made it sound so gloriously inebriated? Could you play it now?"

"Let's go upstairs and try. Is there a fire, children?"

Jane said: "No, there isn't."

"Never mind, we can light it," said Dennis. "Do you remember when we got up at four o'clock to gather mushrooms, and never went further than the kitchen fire? We lighted it, you know, to cook some breakfast, and then sat, making toast and drinking coffee, until we fell asleep, and didn't wake until cook came downstairs to make the regular breakfast."

They had gone upstairs while he was speaking, and Lisa lit the gas, and was about to put a match to the fire which, after the manner of second-rate households, was ready laid.

Cousin Dennis said: "Allow me," and took the matches from her, noticing the hurt finger as he did so.

"Why, what is this, Lisa?"

"Nothing, nothing at all."

"Yes it is. How have you hurt it?"

"It is nothing; only carrying heavy books."

"Why, Lisa, since when have you taken to reading 'heavy books'? And were you so anxious to improve your mind that you damaged your fingers?"

It impressed the children vaguely that their mother did not say the books were not for herself; they would have said so in a moment, and got all the sympathy they could. Their mother got sympathy enough, however, even on the misunderstanding that she had hurt herself in her own service. Cousin Dennis despatched Paul for vaseline, and Jane for an old handkerchief, and made just as much fuss over mother's little ailment as mother would have made over one of them. This

astonished the children completely ; and all the evening, while Lisa talked and laughed like a girl over old, by-gone jokes, and by-gone scrapes and adventures, they crowded round her to listen, with a respect for her unknown before.

Mr. Railton, when told of Dennis West's arrival, remembered him faintly as a forward boy, whom he had very properly put down, but did not take enough interest in him to be pleased, or displeased at his re-appearance until he heard about the money. Then he was pleased, naturally, the mere novelty of the thing was delightful. In these hard times we are so much likelier to meet with people who want to raise money, than people who want to invest it. So he made Dennis welcome to his house, and gave him a great deal of very useful advice. Dennis had a good deal of money, as he had said, but it was scattered at random over the globe. Wherever, in his restless life he had happened to acquire money, he had invested it on the spot in concerns good, bad, or indifferent. The good investments Mr. Railton advised him to leave alone. The bad were to be called in at once—even at a loss—but the indifferent were to be dealt with cautiously. The most extensive among the latter were in Mergui, and it was settled between the two men, that West should go out again presently, fortified by a great deal of advice from Railton, to dispose of them satisfactorily. Meanwhile, Dennis West went often to the little house in Upton Street, and the oftener he went, the less he liked it. Not only because on a nearer acquaintance he found Donald Railton to be narrow-minded, selfish, and contradictions, but because he saw Lisa incessantly worried and alighted, and had to see it in silence.

Oh, I had once a true love,
Now I have—a very ill-tempered husband.
And I had three braw brithers, but I hae tint them
a'.

My father and my mither sleep in the mould this
day.

I sit me lane—in the midst of a house full of very
unattractive and intractable children.

Dennis hummed this very free adaptation of one of Lisa's songs one afternoon in March, as he walked towards Upton Street. Poor Lisa ! The words just expressed her case. Once she had everything, now she had nothing. The husband of her youth had failed her utterly, and her children were so painfully like their father. Poor Lisa ! Once the spoiled darling of a happy home, now the tired drudge of an incon-

siderate household. He could not see how she could possibly have any pleasure in living.

Dennis West was a naturally light-hearted man, who had never realised that the greater part of mankind have no pleasure in living. He thought of his poor little cousin's troubles as something exceptionally sad and terrible ; to-day, as he neared Lisa's door, he was thinking that, if he did not make haste and get away to Mergui, he must have a big row with Railton, and tell him what he thought of him.

He rang the bell, and waited patiently, for it often took the harassed servant some time to disengage herself from the mysteries below, and put on a clean apron. But presently it dawned on him that as he was not expected, the family might be out. Then it occurred to him that on such a fine afternoon everybody might be in the garden. So he walked round the end of the road, and up the lane at the back, counting the shabby brown doors until he found the right number. The door stood open, showing the narrow strip of damp garden. Dennis looked eagerly forward to see if any one was in it, but before he could see, he could hear. Only the old story—something had gone wrong, and Lisa was being scolded and sneered at before the children.

"You should have had the children ready in time, and been ready yourself. I won't wait. We have missed one train already. We ought to be there now."

"It is very unkind of you to leave me behind."

"It is your own fault. You had better come by the next train."

"I will not come alone on a visit, and let every one see how my husband treats me."

Dennis moved away quickly, partly because he knew what bitter words would follow Lisa's indignant speech, and he did not want to hear then, and partly because he knew the shortest way to the railway station was through the back garden, and he did not wish Railton to see him. He might change his mind and stop at home, and Dennis did not want that now ; he wanted to see Lisa, and cheer her a little if he could. He heard the noisy party troop out, he gave them time to turn the corner, and then he entered at the gate. Lisa stood alone in the garden, the early spring light falling round her seeming to mock the big tears on her face.

Her surroundings were not poetic. The

little trim rows of cabbage plants and carrots were sprouting feebly on each side of her. The damp mould of the path, sprinkled stingily with a few ungainly pebbles, looked dull and squalid in the afternoon light; in the background, the harassed servant was languidly shaking a duster out of a bedroom window.

Dennis stood in the doorway looking at Lisa. She had on a big print apron, and it was rather dirty; her hair was untidy, her face tired and flushed, very possibly it was somewhat dirty, too. But Dennis West did not see all this—he only saw that, standing there, she suddenly put up her hands to her face and broke into helpless, hopeless tears; then she turned without seeing him, and went into the house, her head bent, her shoulders shaking with sobs.

And seeing this, Dennis was filled with an overmastering pity. It was true—as he had taken pains to make her understand—he had quite overcome his old boyish love; but he had not forgotten his friendship for the playmate of his childhood, nor his gratitude to her father and brothers—who had been brothers and a father to him—and for friendship's sake, and for gratitude, he would do what he could for Lisa now.

He could not do much; he could not change her husband into an ideal lover; he could not reform her children, nor plant groves of trees all down Upton Street to improve the prospect; but he could at least go there oftener than ever to cheer her up. He could talk over old times with her, play over old tunes, keep her husband in good temper, and prevent the children plaguing her, at least one evening every week; and he would do so, even if he had to let the Mergui property go to ruin.

He waited about half-an-hour, and then went round to the front of the house and asked for Lisa. He found her patient and sweet as ever, ready with conventional excuses for her husband's absence, and not a sign of anger or discontent on her face, and finding this, his pity and veneration for her grew all the deeper.

Dennis not being married, there is no means of judging what sort of a husband he would have made himself; but there is no limit to one man's indignation when another man neglects his wife. Indeed, however indifferent a man may be towards his wife, one wonders that, if only for policy, he does not conceal it before other

men. The sight of a slighted wife invariably raises all that is noble and chivalrous in an onlooker, and a friendship, founded on chivalrous devotion on one side and gratitude on the other, is about the most dangerous friendship that can exist between a married woman, and a man not her husband. It assails her on her weakest and most womanly side—the need of protection. It enlists all his best qualities on the side of wrong-doing, until, while she thinks she is only grateful, and he only means to be generous, they drift past all help.

When Dennis thought everything over that night, and in his own mind reaffirmed his unspoken resolution to remain in London for the sake of rendering poor little Lisa's life as bearable as possible, he went to sleep with an easy mind, utterly unconscious that any practical person would have told him that none but a fool or a knave would have made such a resolution.

A FLY IN AMBER:

OR, SOME ACCOUNT OF THE "HANGING JUDGE" OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

IN the early years of the eighteenth century, when Queen Anne was yet in the land of the living, and the obscure Elector of Hanover was employed, as the sarcastic Jacobite ballad entitled "The wee wee German Lairdie" affirms, in planting leeks and cabbages in his garden, the gentlemen of England differed very considerably in speech and manners from the gentlemen of the present day. At that now remote period, the King's Bench and the Court of Common Pleas were occupied by many eminent and able judges; among others, by one Sir Francis Page, who was neither eminent nor able, and who certainly added neither grace, wisdom, nor dignity to the high position which he held.

Little is known of this functionary in the present day; and it is likely that he would have been entirely forgotten had his name not been preserved, "like a fly in amber," by a couple of lines in Pope's immortal "Dunciad," and in a note to that poem, as well as by an incident in the life of the unfortunate Richard Savage, by his sympathetic friend, Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his "Lives of the Poets."

The allusion to him in the "Dunciad," states that any unfortunate criminal, who might be tried at the Old Bailey, might

expect "hard words and hanging if his judge were Page," and that

Morality by her false guardian drawn
(Chicane in furs and casuistry in lawn)
Gasps as they straiten at each end the cord,
And dies when Dulness gives her "Page" the word.

The note appended to this passage by Martinus Scriblerus, says: "There was a judge of the name of Page, who was always ready to hang any man that came before him, of which he was suffered to give a hundred miserable examples during his long life, even to his dotage, and before he hanged any one, loaded him with reproachful language."

The incident which drew the attention of the most eminent poet of the day to the most contemptible judge upon the bench, occurred in the life of Savage—the brilliant, erratic, and, in every way, unfortunate son of a heartless woman, the Countess of Macclesfield, which is recorded in the touching biography of his friend—and once his companion in misery—Samuel Johnson.

When Savage, who had slain a man in a sudden unpremeditated brawl, was found guilty of murder on the confused and contradictory evidence of two disreputable women, the judge addressed the jury in the following spiteful terms, as reported by Savage himself, after he had received a pardon from the Crown.

"Gentlemen of the jury! You are to consider that Mr. Savage is a very great man—a much greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the jury. That he wears very fine clothes—much finer clothes than either you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he has abundance of money in his pockets—more money than either you or I, gentlemen of the jury; but, gentlemen of the jury, is it not a very hard case, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. Savage should kill either you or me, gentlemen of the jury?"

It does not appear that Savage, who was neither savage by true name nor true nature, exaggerated the style or parodied the language of the egregious magistrate who sentenced him to death. Chance has thrown in the way of the present writer a very rare pamphlet—picked up for a few pence amid heaps of rubbish at an old book-stall—which contains the charge of Judge Page to the Grand Jury of Middlesex, Saturday, May the twenty-third, 1736, when George the Second had been nine years upon the throne. From this pamphlet the following are a few extracts, far more interesting and instructive at the present time than

they were when they made part of the charge delivered to the Grand Jury. They not only illustrate the peculiar style and buzz of this particular wasp in amber, but throw a curious light upon the manners of the age, and the state of society in England a hundred and fifty years ago. They also confirm—though this is a minor point—the essential accuracy of Richard Savage's report of the judge's address to the jury; on the strength of which, and the untrustworthy evidence which was given in the Old Bailey, he was condemned to an ignominious death. The charge commences with a description of the happy state of England at the time, as being free from the miseries of war, which affected foreign nations; a blessing which the judge attributed entirely to the extraordinary wisdom of the Hanoverian Kings who had succeeded the last of the direct line of the Stuarts. Perhaps the time-serving and vulgar judge was an aspirant to the office of Lord Chancellor, the highest and best paid legal functionary of the State, and expected that the fulsomeness of his flattery would procure it?

"'Tis a pleasurable thing," he said, "gentlemen of the jury, to think what a wise King this nation is blessed with! So wise a King, gentlemen, never before sat on the English throne; and no King, gentlemen of the jury, ever carried the glory of this nation to such a height as he has done! The report, gentlemen, of his wisdom and conduct, has brought powerful princes to seek protection under him; and what an honour it is to us, gentlemen! What joy and pleasure and satisfaction to have so wise a King to rule over us! Sweet, gentlemen of the jury, is the wisdom, sweet is the goodness of our King, that he is ever watchful, ever studying, ever cautious for our good, when we, gentlemen of the jury, least think on't! Nor does His Majesty, gentlemen, confine his care for us to the present time, but when he is removed from us, which, gentlemen of the jury, every honest man, every good Englishman, will wish and pray may be late—very late!"

This be-wigged, be-robed, and be-ermined wiseacre went on to explain that, in point of fact, this wisdom and goodness were both exemplified in the happy marriage he had brought about for his eldest daughter, and his son, the Prince of Wales.

"Gentlemen," he went on to say, "in order to make us happy, His Majesty, in his great wisdom, married his eldest

daughter to a Prince nearly allied to that Prince—King William the Third—to whom we owe all that we enjoy at this day; for, had not King William rescued us in the very nick of time from arbitrary power, our liberty and property, and everything else had been taken from us, and we, gentlemen of the jury, had all been made Papiats.

"The good King, gentlemen, for a further assurance of our happiness, has married his son, the Prince of Wales, gentlemen—a promising Prince, inheritor of all his father's wisdom and virtues;—him, gentlemen, His Majesty has married to an excellent Princess, acknowledged by all and everybody to be an agreeable lady! Besides, gentlemen, she is a Protestant Princess; she is descended from a family united by blood, by marriage, or by one thing or other, to all the Protestant families in Europe. What a glorious alliance, gentlemen, is this! This alliance will bring such strength and such security to us and our religion that nothing can hurt us! These great things, gentlemen, His Majesty has done for us; and every honest man, I am sure—every true Englishman—ought to be thankful to Heaven, and to the great wisdom of the King, for this! This, gentlemen of the jury, I thought proper to address to you upon this happy occasion!"

The Royal family, thus eulogised by a sycophant, were by no means models of propriety to the people. The father and son were not on good terms with each other; the Prince of Wales was all but a nonentity, and would have been a nonentity pure and simple, if he had been born in a private station, and the whole of the family were held in but poor esteem by the people generally.

"Autre temps, autre mœurs," as the French say. We can easily imagine what a storm of animadversion, or what a flood of contempt and ridicule the daily and weekly press of our day would aim at the unlucky head of any judge who should bray out from the judgment seat such a fulsome plethora of words as those in which Mr. Justice Page indulged!

The excellent Mr. Punch, who respects the judgment seat and its occupants, and agrees with the public in thinking that they deserve all the esteem and honour that are paid to them in our day, would find food for some very excellent and wholesome satire, if Sir Francis Page flourished in the Victorian, instead of the Georgian era.

But Mr. Justice Page, in this remarkable charge, did not wholly confine his attention to the King and his family, but condescended to expatiate on two topics, which were of as great public interest a hundred and fifty years ago, as they are in our year of grace, 1888. These were the prevalence of drunkenness, and the frauds of dishonest tradesmen. On the first topic he was as wise, as angry, and as scandalised as Sir Wilfrid Lawson himself, or any other apostle of total abstinence. He thus delivered himself on the subject:

"Gentlemen of the jury—I must beg leave to represent to you some nuisances, abuses, and offences which it is your business to rectify. We have very good laws, gentlemen, and I doubt but what you all of you do your duty. But those under you, gentlemen, I am afraid are negligent. There is one great evil, lately grown up amongst us to an exorbitant height, and that is the drinking of spirituous liquors. You have, gentlemen, in every corner of the street, tipping houses, where these spirits are sold. These tipping houses, gentlemen of the jury, are harbours for rogues and thieves, or disorderly persons, and in them they burrow like rabbits. Here, gentlemen, they drink till their blood is inflamed, and they are made fit for any desperate attempt. Then out they issue, and no sooner is a theft committed, than whip-stitch, they are gone! Away they fly to one of their houses that receive both them and their booty. If you pursue them, they know nothing of the matter! There are no such persons there, though at the same time they lie concealed, or lurking in their burrow! But 'tis not these alone, gentlemen of the jury; but your very servants and tradesfolks—men and women—that have taken to drink these pernicious liquors. Ask them to drink a little ale or beer. No! they will not take ale or beer, but a 'sneaker!' Yes, a 'sneaker,' or a dram, nothing less; and even children in arms they will give it to, unmixed! Arrack, rum, or punch! Gentlemen of the jury, it is a melancholy thing to see brave, stout, jolly Englishmen, dwindled away to shrimps; but so it is, gentlemen! And this evil has spread all over the country; insomuch that in the inns, when our duty obliges us to travel, we have much ado to keep our servants sober. The first thing in the morning out comes my landlord, with a bottle in his hand, a dram—aye, a dram to comfort the coachman! And every other servant must have the same! In

the country, where I have the honour to live, a farmer that rents a hundred a year, lives better than the owner of the land. His wife and daughters must drink tea and coffee, and when the good man comes home from his work, he must do so too. Tea, gentlemen of the jury, is but a thin liquor! one that is not apt to raise the spirits, but rather to sink them: why, then, gentlemen, a dram! A dram to qualify the tea feels warm and comfortable to the stomach; and so, gentlemen, they take it, and learn to love it."

The learned judge—so he was called by courtesy—was not, as will be seen, a man after the heart of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, for he favoured the drinking of malt liquors, possibly and very probably drank them himself and advocated their use, in moderation it is to be hoped and presumed, to prevent himself, like other Englishmen, from becoming too shrimp-like in appearance, and enable him to maintain the jollity, the rubicundity, and the portliness usually associated with the popular notion, both at home and abroad, of the veritable John Bull.

"I very well know, gentlemen," he went on to remark, "that it is said that the putting down of these wretched spirits will hurt the farmers, sink the price of corn, and spoil the market. This, gentlemen, is alleged under a pretence that these spirituous liquors are made from barley, and are consequently wholesome for the bodies of men. Spirits are not made of barley, as good ale and beer are, but of such stuff, gentlemen of the jury, such vile stuff, that the very mention of it will surfeit and disgust you; even no other, or better, than your common lay-stalls."

This tremendous allegation, it may be remarked, is on a par with that made in our day—on the authority of eminent chemists, scientists, and philosophers—that claret, supposed to be cheap at a shilling a bottle, may be, and is, concocted out of the refuse of gas-works; and that a saccharine substance, five hundred times sweeter than the sugar which is drawn from beetroot or the sugar cane, can be drawn from the same forbidding and apparently worthless material.

The judge was as enthusiastic in his praise of barley, and the drink made from it, as he was emphatic in his condemnation and detestation of the stuff made, as he believed, of the filthy liquor of the lay-stalls on dunghills.

"Yee," he said, "gentlemen of the jury,

barley is a great support to the kingdom; but spirits are not made of it, as I have said. And, indeed, how can they be? For I am well informed that spirits are sold, and a good profit made out of them, at so low a price as tenpence per gallon; whereas, gentlemen of the jury, the raising the barley, malting it, and afterwards working it, will cost at least double that sum. But when, instead of drinking these vile spirits, the people take to drinking good ale and beer, and are then able to work, the consumption and price of corn will increase, and both farmer and landlord will be the better for it."

Judge Page did good service in his own eccentric way, and in his own peculiar language, to the cause of fair and honest dealing when he denounced the frauds and tricks of the "Jerry builders." The class, it appears, existed, though they were not known by the name of "Jerry builders" in an age which was not quite so exuberant in the cultivation and growth of slang as ours is. After complaining of the bad state of the streets of London, and the neglect of the parishes to keep them in proper order and repair, he fell foul of the coach-makers, whom he accused of being public nuisances and of being in league with the dishonest builders to defraud and injure the public.

"Nothing," he affirmed, "is more common, gentlemen of the jury, than for coach-makers to turn a whole street into a shop, and spread it all over with coaches and carriages. And then, gentlemen, as you drive along, slap you come against some of them! Down comes your coach, and perhaps a wheel, an axle-tree, or your pole is broken, if not your neck! And what care they? It makes business for some of them. This, gentlemen, is a great abuse, and contrary to law. . . . If a man wants to pull down or repair a house, immediately the street is covered with rubbish, perhaps, you will think, in order to save the charge of carrying it away; but not so, gentlemen of the jury! It is for quite other purpose! I will tell you for what. Wheels and carriages, by often going over this rubbish, grind it to powder. This powder, gentlemen of the jury, they sift, and of this they make mortar. With this rotten stuff, gentlemen, they build your houses! By which means you are never safe; so that there are great odds every night that you may find your houses tumbling about your ears in the morning. This, gentlemen, is a very great evil! I might tell you of many mischiefs of this kind; but as gentle-

men of your parts, learning, and fortune, know these things, I shall trouble you no further!"

The judge concluded this remarkable charge by an additional and quite needless characteristic eulogium of the King: "I beg leave, gentlemen, to observe and desire, that as we have a wise King, and a gracious King, who does all he can for us, that you, gentlemen, will do your part too. Then everything will go well, peace and plenty will flourish, and we shall all be happy."

It is somewhat difficult to believe in our day when the fierce light of newspaper criticism beats so fiercely on the recorded sayings of parliamentary, judicial, and forensic speeches, and even on the elocutionary deliverances of vestrymen and mob-orators, that the charge of Mr. Justice Page, as it has come down to us through the publication of this pamphlet in 1736, was not coloured and exaggerated by the reporter, or even that it may not have been a clever parody of the judge's well-known style, and a travesty of his opinions. But the probabilities in favour of its authenticity preponderate greatly over those which tend to throw doubt upon it. The extravagant laudation of the impossible wisdom of the King, almost looks as if the charge were more or less the invention of some "mauvais plaisant" among the Roman Catholic partizans of the exiled Stuarts. However this may be, the production as it stands gives a remarkable view of the manners and modes of thought of the age in which it appeared, and throws a side-light upon the curious character of the "Hanging Judge," who was destined to achieve the unenviable distinction of being placed, skeleton-like, in the anatomical museum of the "Dunciad."

AT NICE IN SPRING-TIME.

HAPPY, indeed, is the man who is enabled to spend that portion of the year, which at home is still pleasantly called spring-time, away from home; to emerge from damp and cold into the purest and clearest of air; to exchange gloom and misery for brilliant sunshine and skies of the deepest, unsullied blue; and to live in a world where all is brightness, and gaiety, and animation.

As pleasant a city of refuge to the climate-bullied Briton as any, is Nice. No gentle, seductive sanatorium for the

shattered constitution is Nice; brisk, strong, breezy, and healthy, she bears the same relation to the softer resorts, Cannes, Mentone, the Italian Riviera, the Canary Islands, and Madeira, that a sturdy mountain blossom bears to the creation of the hot-house gardener, or that one of Rubens's stalwart beauties bears to the languishing shepherdesses of Watteau.

No invalid should seek re-constitution at Nice; for, although beneath its hot sun semi-tropical plants and fruits flourish, cold days are not infrequent, snow-falls are not unknown, and, even under the most tempting conditions, lounging and loafing there are not to be recommended.

From December until the middle of March, life at Nice is one unbroken round of gaiety, and the chief difficulty experienced by the visitor who has come to escape for awhile from social trammels and grooves, is to avoid being drawn into the social vortex; for acquaintances are easily made, introductions are readily given, without much formality in the shape of references and inquiry-making, and, once drawn into the whirlpool, exit is well-nigh impossible. Dinners, balls, concerts, at home, receptions, afternoon teas follow each other in rapid succession; weeks pass by like days, and, too frequently, when the time for departure comes, the man or woman who has come to the South for rest and gentle recreation, is as jaded and worn out as at the end of a London season. There are scores of people who, at home, talk glibly and enthusiastically about the natural beauty of the Riviera, who in reality know little more about this beauty than from the glimpses they get when taking their orthodox drives along the dusty roads prescribed by fashion. When one has to attend a concert and a couple of receptions in an afternoon, followed, perhaps, by a dinner and a ball, there is not much physical strength left for an exploration the next morning of the country which lies beyond the boundaries of villa land.

Competition runs high in the Nice social arena. To cram as much visiting and entertainment as possible into a given time seems to be the main object of the Riviera sojourn of many a visitor; not to appear on lists of guests at fashionable entertainments, not to be on speaking terms with the local lights of society, causes many a bitter pang in the bosoms of those who have fled from their native land ostensibly for sanitary reasons.

Yet, perhaps, with the exception of

Monte Carlo, there is no place where society is so "mixed" as at Nice; and it is strange to note how our countrymen and women boast of intimacy with owners of mysterious Russian, Italian, and German titles, with whom they would hardly be seen speaking at home, and allow their daughters to attend entertainments of a character not usually associated with the phrase, "*comme il faut*," as understood on our side of the Channel. But, after all, we come here for amusement, and amusement in abundance we have, according to our different tastes.

Carnival comes in opportunely enough just as people are beginning to weary of seeing the same faces and hearing the same small talk in hot reception and ball rooms.

During Carnival time Nice runs mad; not only Nice the foreign, the volatile, the light-hearted, the jolly-living, but staid, prosaic, common-place, reserved Nice, as represented by the Anglo-Saxon community. The disease is contagious, and we have seen British citizens comporting themselves during the battles of "confetti" and flowers, as surely British citizens never comported themselves ere the Riviera became famous. Indeed, it may be said that the success of Carnival is in no small degree owing to the part taken in it by the Anglo-Saxon visitors—at any rate, they rarely fail to win one or more prizes for the best decked carriages at the flower-battles; and it is very certain that the vigorous "confetti" throwing of young England, masculine and feminine, is a prominent feature of the other mimic warfare.

In spite of this, it is whispered that Carnival is "*en décadence*," and the reason is not far to be sought.

When Carnival was strictly a church festival, all classes were enabled to take part in it at a comparatively little expense. But now that it is, so far as the Riviera is concerned, more or less a commercial speculation got up by those who have the local interests at heart, the people, whose festival it is, act the part of spectators, and the active work is performed by the well-to-do. When the practice was introduced of giving prizes for cars and costumes and decorations, a blow was dealt at the very heart of Carnival. Giovanni and Gustave, who formerly enjoyed masquerading and licence for buffoonery, found themselves cut out by the wealthy, who vied with each other in the magnificence of their display, but, with characteristic affection for the main chance,

comforted themselves with the reflection that the more money spent by the rival wealthy ones, the better would things in general be for their good town; and thereupon laid themselves out for the enjoyment of a magnificent spectacle which cost them nothing.

To see the genuine Carnival of old days, therefore, one must go to the smaller Italian towns, such as Padua and Verona, or to Basle or Catholic Germany; and certainly not to Rome, or the tourist-haunted places of the Riviera.

After Carnival Nice empties; and although the subsequent *Mi-Carême fêtes* have expanded into a week's duration, and the town fills for that time, the social season is practically defunct. Perhaps there was never a more desponding spectacle, save a Lord Mayor's Show in a fog, than was presented this year at the much-advertised "*Corso Blanc*." It was the rain that did it, according to all accounts and explanations; but we are inclined to think that sheer weariness of tom-foolery was at the root of the failure.

At any rate, white as everything was made—soldiers on guard in white fatigue dress, stands and flag-staffs draped in white, dazzling electric light, and the illumination of innumerable white lanterns—the show resolved itself into a procession down the *Promenade des Anglais* of some dozen white-robed and decorated vehicles, the very whips of the drivers being white, and the horses of the same colour, the occupants of which sadly pelted each other and the yawning crowd, with handfuls of torn-up paper. Of fun there was a complete absence; and the silence of the crowd, considering that it was a Southern crowd, was remarkable.

By the end of March, Nice is drained of her visitors; the trains bound Italy-wards are crammed to suffocation; the *Promenade des Anglais* is deserted; the carriage-road in front of Rumpelmeyer's famous restaurant is free from obstruction; rooms on the "*entresol*" may be had in most of the hotels at fourth-floor prices, and as one walks the almost deserted streets, it is hard to realize that but a few days back here was the very centre of the whirl of fashion.

Now is the time for exploring the country which lies around; and perhaps no better centre for such exploration can be found on the Riviera than Nice.

A strange feature of the attractiveness of this department of *Alpes-Maritimes*, is

that there is absolutely nothing in common between it and the beauty of other European resorts. We are so accustomed to regard grass and foliage tints as entering principally into the composition of a beautiful landscape, as distinguished from a grand landscape, that without having seen the Riviera scenery we can hardly conceive a scene to be beautiful in which they play no part.

Yet in the country around Nice, although the almond trees are rich with pink blossom, and the shrubs are pushing forth fresh green shoots, there is no verdure worthy of the name. Of grass, there is none; of trees, as we understand trees, there are none. The foliage of the orange and lemon trees is fairly brilliant, and is shown off by the golden fruit; but the trees are small and stunted. The green of the olive is sombre. The foliage of the tallest tree here, the eucalyptus, is not to be compared with that of an oak, or an elm, or a chestnut, or a beech. Simply we have the forests of pine and fir, and these—clothing the ranges of hills, bringing out in sharp relief the picturesque masses of sunlit crags and cliffs, standing sharply out against a sky of peerless blue, and backed by distant ranges of snow-clad mountains—are important elements in a panorama, the beauty of which never palls.

There are splendid roads in all directions, as there are wherever the French tricolor floats; but he who would penetrate the hidden beauties of the Nice country had far better trust to his own legs. They need be of substantial construction, for, off the high roads there is hardly half-a-mile of level walking, and the paths are mere mule or goat tracks, made up of loose boulders and masses of slippery rock, running up and down the sides of hills at very steep angles. But we are amply repaid by the splendid freshness and purity of the air, and by the ever-changing views which meet our sight at every ascent and every turn. Another prominent feature of the country is that, although it is France, there is so little that is French about it.

The villages perched on the hill-tops—most of them relics of an age when each village was a little feudal world in itself—are just what one sees scattered along the Italian Riviera. Temptingly white and picturesque when seen from a distance, a nearer acquaintance dispels the illusion, and progress up the steep, gloomy, narrow street means intimacy with every known

variety of smell, and every kind of dirt and squalor, so that arrival at the invariable church on the plateau at the hill-top is hailed with delight.

The people themselves seem unable to shake off their allegiance to the Italy which cradled their sires. The men dress as they do in Genoa or Naples; their "patois" is very much more Italian than French; most of the inn and shop inscriptions are in Italian; and, above all, they possess the eminently Italian characteristic of doing as little work as possible, and of allowing their wives and daughters to do it for them. So we see, as throughout Italy, women staggering under heavy burdens, or tending the soil under the burning sun, whilst their lords and masters lounge about the "osteria" door, or sleep on benches, or play bowls, delighted to talk to, or drink with a stranger.

Lack of colour, we have said, is the chief deficiency in Nature around Nice, and yet we are in a veritable Paradise of flowers. All through the winter months may be seen in the famous flower market of Nice roses, anemones, jonquils, narcissi, sweet-scented violets, yellow mimosa, parti-coloured hyacinths; all grown in the open air, and brought in fresh every morning from the country. Born amidst such luxuriance, it is not surprising that the people should love colour in their dress; hence the darkest and most squalid of village streets is rendered artistic and picturesque in appearance by the dashes of colour amidst the gloom—here a gaudy head-dress, here a bright scarf, here a mass of golden fruit, or a festoon of brilliant blossoms—and so harmonious is the general effect of the dark street, with its bits of red, and yellow, and blue, with its dazzling red roofs standing against the deep blue sky, that we forgive smells, and dirt, and harsh, strident voices, and call it all beautiful in our enthusiasm.

Besides the mere pottering about villages and the tracing of mountain-paths, there is plenty of genuine stern climbing for those who prefer it. A diligence journey of a few hours takes us into the very heart of the Maritime Alps, where as much roughing it and tough collar-work may be had as is wanted amongst mountains, upon which the snow ever rests, and which are, we believe, comparatively unexplored. The beginner may try his 'prentice hand upon Mont Agel, which stands above the village of Roguebrunne, just beyond Monte Carlo, climbing straight up the face

and not availing himself of the comparatively easy path from the village of La Turbie. The peerless panorama extending over hill and dale, olive woods and orange groves, and bounded in the shimmering distance by the majestic, gigantic, snow-clad peaks of the Maritime Alps, is an ample reward for his two hours' clamber up the rugged mountain-side. Mont Baudan and its neighbours may then be attacked, until the genuine peaks are reached, and mountaineering worthy of the name undertaken.

The historical interest of the neighbourhood of Nice is not very striking, but the track of the old Roman colonist is visible in all directions. At Cimiez, a sort of suburb of Nice, stood the town of Cemenum, which, from the remains yet existing, must have been of some importance as a place of summer resort for the merchants of Massilia and Antipolis—now Marseilles and Antibes. Upon the lines of the ancient Via Julia Aurelia the famous Corniche road runs to a great extent, and at the village of La Turbie there yet exist the remains of a tower of triumph ascribed to the Emperor Augustus, whilst in most of the rock-perched villages around are traces of Roman occupation.

At Venice—the goal for a charming walk in the wild country upon the other side of the Var river—stood the Roman Vintium, containing not only Roman remains but many interesting relics of the days when it was the stronghold of the Lords of Venice, and the seat of a Bishopric. On the Cap Saint Martin are remains of Roman villas and sea-side retreats, buried in the depths of flower-decked thickets and luxuriant semi-tropical vegetation.

All these places are within easy distance of Nice, and, where a long tramp through the outskirts of the town is wished to be avoided, the railway and the numerous tramway lines may be used with great advantage.

In Nice itself, to the visitor who has resolutely set his face against being drawn into the social whirlpool, there is not much of interest. When one has ascended to the Castle plateau and duly admired the land and sea view therefrom, and sighed over the funeral gimcrackery heaped over the tomb of Gambetta in the cemetery; when one has visited the port, with its quaint assemblage of cranky old Italian trading craft lying alongside the smart yachts of foreign millionaires; when one has explored the Promenade des Anglais, and has examined the tempting

shops on the quays; when one has listened to the band in the gardens, and has taken one all-sufficient walk through the dark, narrow, evil-smelling streets of the old town; when one has attended the flower market, and has walked through the typical fish market; when one has taken the regulation drive by Mont Boron to Villefranche, Banchen, and Armud, and the Cap Saint Jean, Nice is exhausted, and one's thoughts turn country-wards.

Yet Nice exercises that sort of spell over the visitor which induces him to continually postpone his departure until the intended visit of a week is insensibly extended into a month, and even then it is with genuine regret that he tears himself away from the brilliant sunshine, the animation, the gaiety, and the careless life, even though the next goal be some resort even more beautiful and more interesting in itself than the famous town seated by the blue waters of the Bay of Angels.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN EVENING WITH MADAME DE FERRAND.

MADAME DE FERRAND was sitting on a long sofa at the end of her salon, talking to Mrs. Percival. Her rooms and herself had the same air of simple distinction. She was one of the real great ladies of Paris; but she was not rich, and was far too proud for any pretences or affectations. In France, in a time like the present, when there is no Court, and therefore no organised society, thousands of people take titles without any right to them, and whole fabrics of false greatness are built up on a foundation of money. But in spite of all this, the old noble families can hold their own; they have a position, and they have influence, though they often do not claim the one, or use the other. But, in truth, no French politicians have yet been able to destroy French history, or to take those old names out of the native atmosphere in which they live.

There sat little Madame de Ferrand in her plain old room, without any of the ordinary adornments of Paris life, with her pale, smiling face, and grey hair, and black

lace cap, and straight black gown. There were plenty of women in Paris, with ten times her fortune, magnificent women on whom the crowd looked with envy, who would have given a good deal to find themselves sitting beside that old Vicomtesse on her chintz-covered "canapé."

But Madame de Ferrand, agreeable, tolerant, religious, amusing, altogether delightful as she was, was also perfectly exclusive. She was supposed to live very quietly in her corner of the Faubourg; to go nowhere and see nobody; the fact was that all the best people in Paris came regularly to see her; and an invitation to dinner from Madame de Ferrand was a sort of testimonial, for, unlike many ladies of her kind, she thought quite as much of people's moral character as of their names.

In asking Mrs. Percival and Miss Darrell to dine with her that evening, Madame de Ferrand was of course indulging the amiable eccentricity of her son-in-law. She did not personally care much for English people; they always seemed to her unfinished, the women especially; and Mrs. Percival, sitting radiant in her best Paris gown beside the little Vicomtesse, would have been surprised and shocked if she could have read the thoughts hidden behind those pleasant smiles and pretty chattering.

"Poor woman! a little 'bourgeoise,' like so many of them, and so much too smart for the occasion. But a good woman, poor thing, and no doubt passable in her own country. The girl is better than her aunt—rather distinguished, really. Achille thinks her a wonderful beauty—partly his English craze, of course—but still——"

Madame de Ferrand was very fond of her son-in-law, and did all she could to keep up her influence over him, partly for the sake of his daughter, who was the one object of her interest, and love, and care. Antoinette had told her grandmother, not without tears, of the scene at La Tour Blanche, her own misery, her father's goodness. She was now beginning to see that she might have been a little selfish; but still her father's promise, that these ideas should be given up for her sake, seemed to lie warm at her heart, and made her too happy for any deep repentance. Grand-mamma looked into the pleading eyes, and kissed the two flushed cheeks, and laughed any lingering trouble away. It appeared that she was quite ready to join Antoinette's father in spoiling the child; but a few among Madame de Ferrand's friends knew that she seriously meant her son-in-law to

marry again one of these days, and quite understood that, in her mind at least, the idea was only laid aside for the present.

At the other end of Madame de Ferrand's salon, Antoinette, a good deal tied up with blue ribbons, was showing Celia a book of old caricatures. Celia, in a simple white dress, looked very young and very lovely. The two heads—dark and golden—were a pretty contrast as they bent over the book. Antoinette clapped her hands and went into small peals of laughter, sometimes more at her companion's remarks than at the pictures themselves, for Celia seemed to throw herself into this form of amusement as if there were nothing in the world she cared for more, and all sorts of new meanings seemed to come dancing out of the funny, ugly old pictures as those blue eyes studied them, and that pretty clever mouth went on talking.

"What vivacity she has, your beautiful niece!" said Madame de Ferrand in her quiet little voice to Mrs. Percival, at the other end of the long room.

"She has always been a favourite with other young people," said Mrs. Percival, smiling, and looking delighted.

"She amuses herself most amiably with my little Antoinette: a charming temper evidently," said the Vicomtesse; and then she went on to ask one or two questions about Celia's engagement, which M. de Montmirail had explained to her.

"Is he not on the whole a little young for her? Not in years, I mean," she said in the lowest of tones, with a playful smile. "Of course it is only an old woman's fancy; a stranger—who knows how to admire, however——"

"Well, possibly," Mrs. Percival confessed. "They are in fact just the same age; but he is boyish, I dare say. He has a great deal of character though, and, I assure you, for a girl in her position, poor child, her prospects are very good indeed."

"Such looks might make a young lady independent of any position, madame," said the Vicomtesse. "At least my son-in-law tells me that in England it would be so. In France I fear we are less romantic. No doubt there is something to be said on both sides."

Madame de Ferrand then went on to discuss the education of girls, and Mrs. Percival listened smilingly, without attempting any argument; she wisely thought that this was impossible between two people who saw things from entirely different points of view.

In her own mind, Mrs. Percival was by no means at ease about Celia, and was inclined to be angry with her, though she enjoyed Madame de Ferrand's admiration, and shared it too. If she had known all, she might have admired Celia for a self-control of which she herself, in like circumstances, would hardly have been capable. It was now just twenty-four hours since Celia had received that telegram from Paul, following on his first letter full of affection and confidence. Celia had read the letter once through, smiled over it, and then laid it aside. Paul's rhapsodies were only strings of words to her; and she liked him better than his letters. But the telegram was rather a different thing. She received it when she was alone in her room; and this was fortunate, as she certainly would not have cared to explain it to her aunt. She sat and looked at it for a few minutes, with a sort of singing in her ears, and a shiver that ran all over her; for the first time in her life, perhaps, Celia was frightened. As soon as she had collected her wits a little, having instantly known what she had done, she went to her writing-case to make things certain. Of course it was so; her letter to Paul, a common-place history of what they had done since he went away, with the necessary enquiries for Colonel Ward, was lying there between the leaves; the rough sketch of a letter which she had scribbled to Vincent was gone—gone into the wrong hands; gone to the very last person who was meant to see it, without a name or a beginning to prevent him from reading it—gone to spoil everything, to take away the future which she had chosen for herself, to throw her back into chance, and dependence, and poverty, unless she could in some way recover her footing, and escape the consequences of such a fatal and ridiculous mistake.

What was to be done? For once in her life Celia was thoroughly puzzled, as well as furious with herself for her carelessness. She knew exactly how it had happened. She had been called away in a hurry to see a milliner who could not wait, and had folded her sheet of paper without looking at it, and sent Timms down to post the letter, with the real intention of pleasing Paul and making him happy in his banishment. And now she had brought this upon herself. Well, it was a triumph for Vincent; she supposed that his letter would have to be answered in a different way now. But at this moment she felt angry with Vincent, who

had brought her into this horrible scrape, and was very sure that she did not care enough for him to wait three years; and was determined, if by any means it was possible, to have her own way still. Paul was the most devoted lover that a girl ever had—her slave, in fact; faithful to her in every thought; gentle, generous, unselfish: he and herself must both be changed, indeed, if she could not keep him where he was, at her feet, without any great trouble of explaining what could not be explained. One thing was very clear: she would not have any correspondence on the subject. Paul must come back to her, and then she was sure of her power; she could soon convince him, then, that the silly letter meant anything, or nothing. So, in answer to that telegram, she wrote just three lines:

"MY DEAREST PAUL,—Come back, and I will tell you all about it. I want you dreadfully. Your own loving CELIA."

When this was safely posted, she told herself that all would be right now. But perhaps one's moral character always takes a little revenge, when one tries harder than usual to drag it down. She could not sleep that night, and was in a restless temper all the next day. Paul's letter, which came in the afternoon, irritated her still further, though it was comforting in one way; whatever he thought, however deeply he were mystified, it was plain that he suspected nothing.

Celia was out shopping with Mrs. Percival all that day, and insisted on one or two pieces of rather wild extravagance, which surprised and annoyed her aunt a little. She was also curiously changeable, and gave a great deal of trouble in the shops. As they drove home she said to Mrs. Percival, "And suppose this wedding never comes off after all!"

"Then, my dear," said her aunt, "I know whose fault it will be."

"Whose?"

"Yours, of course."

Celia laughed, and after that recovered herself. In fact, during the rest of the day her spirits were so unusually high that Mrs. Percival, who thought a good deal of Paul and the dear old Colonel, was obliged to confess to herself that Celia was rather heartless. However, she was glad that her niece should appear to advantage at Madame de Ferrand's in the evening, and watched with amusement the admiring glances of the two Frenchmen, M. de Montmirail and his friend M. de Cernay,

the ugly and good-natured, who had come to the Deux Frères for a day or two, and was highly entertained by meeting the two English ladies at dinner. He, however, did not venture once to address Celia, who, for her part, was quite clever enough not to shock Madame de Ferrand by any English forwardness, and though quite ready to talk to the Marquis, kept her prettiest smiles for Antoinette.

After dinner, in the smoking-room, Miss Celia Darrell was for a long time the subject of talk between M. de Cernay and M. de Montmirail. M. de Cernay found his friend's admiration a little too enthusiastic.

"If the young lady had been rich, as they generally are," he reflected—"and if she had not been engaged to a respectable Englishman, I suspect la petite Antoinette might tear her hair in vain, and we might find ourselves with an English Protestant neighbour."

M. de Cernay made faces at the bare idea of such a catastrophe, but did not hint his suspicions to Achille, who was a little high-flown, and might have resented them.

He watched his friend rather carefully, however, through the rest of the evening. Of course there was no real danger, as Miss Darrell was engaged; but in spite of this, M. de Cernay felt that he would have a good deal of interesting description to take home to his wife. She had always said that the dear Marquis, in spite of all his cheerful and dignified philosophy, would fall foolishly in love some day.

They played that evening Madame de Ferrand's favourite Spanish game of "reversi." Mrs. Percival was rather stupid, but Celia learned it with astonishing quickness, and they laughed a great deal, while Antoinette looked over their shoulders. She had quite lost her heart to Celia, who for her part was delighted with these dear good-humoured people, and would have really been as happy as she looked, if that cloud had not been hanging on her horizon. As she sat there at Madame de Ferrand's card-table, her thoughts were wandering between three subjects—the game she was playing; calculations as to when her letter would reach Paul; and M. de Montmirail, the expression of whose eyes when they met hers was, to say the least, amusing. He did not mean it, of course, for he was the soul of honour. Celia thought him wonderfully handsome; she reflected what a chevalier he would have made in the olden time, dressed in silks, and satins, and feathers.

He was certainly much handsomer than Vincent, she thought, and much pleasanter to look at. Older, of course; but he looked younger, for his face was smooth and happy, while Vincent's was worn by ill-temper and a hot climate. Then she inwardly laughed at herself for the comparison, and smiled frankly at the Marquis, and went on playing her game, while that ugly little M. de Cernay talked in low tones to Madame de Ferrand, and watched her all the time.

Rather early in the evening they were interrupted. A note was brought in to M. de Montmirail, who looked at it, begged his mother-in-law to excuse him for an instant, and went out of the room. As he got up from the table he glanced at Celia; it was a grave, startled, quite different look, and she knew instantly that in some way that note concerned her. Somehow he looked sorry for her. What was it? Could anything have happened to Paul?

Presently M. de Montmirail came back again, and this time he really did look very solemn, so that the old Vicomtesse, and M. de Cernay, and Antoinette, all exclaimed together.

Celia's blue eyes deepened as she looked at him, and she turned a little pale. He went up to Mrs. Percival, who started with surprise; it had not occurred to her that the note concerned any one but himself.

"Madame," he said, "I am truly sorry to spoil such a pleasant evening, but I have just seen my friend—your friend, Mr. Romaine. It appears that he has brought you some news. I begged him to come in, ma mère," said the Marquis, turning to Madame de Ferrand, "but he has not long arrived from England, and his only wish is to see these ladies. He tells me, too, that he must go back to-morrow morning; therefore——"

Mrs. Percival started up hurriedly.

"Dear Madame," said Madame de Ferrand, with the kindest politeness, "do not delay a moment. We shall see you again. I only hope the news is nothing serious."

Celia followed her aunt out of the room in a sort of dream. What could have brought Paul now, so soon—before he could possibly have received her letter! With all her high spirit, all her confidence in herself, and in Paul's love, she dreaded the explanation of that evening. Then a cloak was put gently round her shoulders, and she looked up for a moment, in the dim

light of the vestibule, into a face she could never afterwards forget: it was so full of admiration, of tenderness, and more than that. Celia knew that she had made a conquest, but it seemed a useless one: the adoration of the most perfect of heroes would be no help to her in her present scrape. In another moment, the Marquis was attending on her aunt, with the gravest politeness; he now looked rather pale and stern; perhaps he was angry at having forgotten himself for an instant. The dear little Antoinette came up close to Celia, took her hand and kissed it softly.

"Oh, don't!" Celia whispered, and with a quick caress she kissed the girl on both cheeks.

"Are you sad?" murmured Antoinette. "Are you afraid that 'ce monsieur' has brought bad news of the old friend? Are you very fond of him, too?"

"Yes—oh, yes; perhaps he has," Celia answered confusedly. "My aunt is very anxious."

"Shall we see you to-morrow?"

"I don't know. I hope so;" and Celia followed her aunt, who had gone out into the courtyard with M. de Montmirail; they were looking back for her.

In the few moments of crossing the street to the hotel Celia was conscious of an intense irritation against herself, against Paul, Vincent, her aunt, the whole world, not forgetting those people who were tiresome enough to be ill and die.

She hated long faces; and she felt sure that Colonel Ward was dead. All this had come upon her too suddenly, and she was not at all prepared to carry out the tactics which she had begun in her useless letter to Paul the night before. She was angry, and felt a little reckless and desperate.

When Paul, very quiet and very undemonstrative, met them outside the Deux Frères, and M. de Montmirail bowed and went back to his house, Celia caught herself wishing that she could go back with him. As they walked into the hotel she heard Paul telling her aunt about the Colonel; she heard the quick sob in her aunt's voice: "Oh, poor dear!" and she herself felt perfectly unmoved.

Paul did not speak to her. They had all gone up into a little ante-room belonging to Mrs. Percival's room, a narrow slip, piled with boxes and parcels, and there Mrs. Percival sat down and listened, and cried now and then, for she was a soft-

hearted woman. She was too much absorbed to notice anything strange or unnatural in Paul's manner. Of course his grief was very deep, and yet, if she had reflected, what depth of grief could make a division between him and Celia, so that he could stand in a room where she was sitting, and talk quietly on, with his eyes on the floor, without even once looking at her? Mrs. Percival did not notice it, but Celia did, and, in spite of herself, she shivered as she sat there; for the first time in her life she was afraid of Paul.

"But, my dear boy," said Mrs. Percival at last, "what quantities of things you must have to do! Why did you come over? Really it was rather absurd. Why in the world didn't you write, or telegraph?"

"Because I had something to do here," Paul answered. "I am going back to-morrow. I want to talk to Celia about something. Perhaps you wouldn't mind leaving us alone together. Shall it be now?" he said, turning for the first time to Celia.

"Now? Certainly, if you like," she answered, in a tone as cold as his own.

"Why—what is the matter?" exclaimed Mrs. Percival, suddenly waking up to the situation and looking in amazement from one to the other.

"Nothing," said Celia, "except that Paul is angry with me."

She leaned back in her chair and folded her hands. She was looking down, and flushed crimson. Paul turned a little whiter than before.

"But what is it? Good gracious! When did it happen? What has she done, Paul?" cried Mrs. Percival.

"He can't tell you," said Celia in a low tone, as Paul made no answer. "Go away, dear Aunt Flo, and leave us to fight it out. You would have thought there was trouble enough without this, wouldn't you?"

"I certainly am surprised that you should both choose such a time for quarrelling," said Mrs. Percival.

She stood still for a moment, looking anxiously, with tearful eyes, at the two incomprehensible young people, who were both staring obstinately at the ground. Then she sighed, shrugged her shoulders, and went away into her own room with a few parting words.

"I must say, if you persist in quarrelling now, you will be very unfeeling and very idiotic."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 1015. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MAY 12, 1888.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

By RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XXL GOWER'S CANONISATION.

MEANWHILE Gower, owing in part to Fred's instructions, in part to his own shyness, and in part to his fear of frightening May, was behaving towards her with singular and engaging delicacy. Except by consulting her upon the position in which he had placed himself with his father, through taking upon himself Fred's guilt, he hardly reminded her of her obligation, or even, we might almost say, of their engagement.

In the letter—with which he had followed up his telegram to his father—Gower confessed that he had altered the figures of the cheque under the pressure of extreme necessity, when his father was too ill to be troubled with such matters; that he had got Beresford to endorse and cash it for him because he was too nervous himself to present it; and that Beresford had no knowledge of, and no benefit from, the forgery.

To this letter he had got the following furious answer:

"You reckoned on my death when you forged that cheque, as its date shows. You shall not have much to reckon on in future, so far at least as I can keep you out of temptation; for you shall not touch one single penny of what I can leave away from you—not one penny! To secure you against a second disappointment, I have given instructions that you are to be sent for to attend my funeral—not before."

"GEORGE GOWER."

This letter was submitted first to Fred, who read it twice before pronouncing upon it.

"I say, old fellow, this looks serious," he said at last.

"I don't know what you mean by serious. It's ruin, that's all."

"Oh, but hang it! he won't hold on to this, you know."

"Why not? What else could he do? What else could any one do who thought me such an infernal rogue?"

"I do feel such a sweep about this, old man." Gower maintained a sullen silence.

"If I had thought he would have taken it like this, I shouldn't have allowed you to do it. I couldn't, no matter what became of me."

"I don't know how else you could have expected him to take it."

"But you didn't expect it yourself, or even you couldn't have done it, even for May. She didn't expect it any way, and she'll just be heart-broken about it."

Another silence, during which Gower's sulk was evidently thawing.

"Look here, old fellow, you've only to show this letter to May, and she will insist on setting you right with your father. As it is, she's wretched enough about all she owes you; but she never dreamed of such a debt as this. Give me a couple of days clear to go under, and she'll be glad, and I'll be glad to be out of it;" "it" meaning the obligation to Gower, but being also intended to suggest May's engagement.

"It's too late now," Gower growled; but added immediately, and more graciously: "And any way, I don't want to be out of it."

"Well, but I do—to be perfectly frank with you—I'm sick of everything: Cambridge, and debts, and duns, and this biggest debt of all to you. I dare say you don't mean to make much of it, and anyhow you couldn't make more of it than it is. It's a big thing to owe any one—even

you—and I can't stand it any longer. Just give me a day or two to duck under to come up somewhere in Australia or California, a free man with a clean slate, and then you can send in my confession to your governor. I declare it would be a relief to me, and more than a relief to May."

"A relief to get out of her engagement, you mean?" asked Gower.

However, Fred was as little anxious to give a truthful answer, as Gower was to hear it.

"No, I don't mean anything of the kind. She has said nothing to me about wishing to get out of her engagement; but she never ceases to speak about the big debt she owes you, and your generosity, and all that sort of thing; and of course this letter will make her think more of it than ever."

"But I promised to show it to her when it came," Gower replied quickly, more eager now than ever to show it.

"I think you ought to show it, and then she'll not make any bother about my bolting or about father and mother getting to know the whole business."

"Oh, I mean to stand to it now," Gower said loftily.

"It's very good of you; but I must be considered," Fred rejoined, with an audacious inversion of their mutual positions; and he forthwith proceeded to give over again the reasons why he could not allow Gower to have his own selfish way in the matter.

The fact was that Fred really did not care very much now which way the matter went. Gower would most probably be disinherited, and would so cease to be an eligible brother-in-law; while Fred was sick, as he said, of Cambridge, and debts, and duns, and sick also of Gower's trying patronage. He did not in the least fear that Sir George Gower would pursue him with a prosecution to America or Australia, especially after he had frankly confessed the offence to the exculpation of his son; and he had all the hopes of a young, sanguine and self-confident man in an adventurous life in a new world. As for the blow the revelation of his crime would be to his mother and father, and his exile to his mother and May, he hardly had it in his thoughts.

Though, therefore, he would, on the whole, have preferred that the matter should rest where it was, he was not so anxious about it as to be unable to suppress the appearance of anxiety, or even to assume plausibly the pretence of an

opposite anxiety—to get free from the insupportable obligation to Gower.

Thus Gower, to his stupefaction, found himself adjured by Fred to do him the kindness of retracting his confessions to his father! The appeal had the effect intended by Fred of immediately deciding Gower to stand to his magnanimous self-sacrifice. His infatuation with May would have finally brought him to such a decision in any case; but he would have hesitated, and held off, and mortified Fred with a crushing sense of the sacrifice he was making for him, if that wily youth had not turned the tables upon him so completely.

"There's your sister to consider," Gower objected at last, in reply to Fred's pleading to be relieved from his obligation.

"But it was for her sake you did it, wasn't it? She will feel this debt to you more than I do when she sees the letter, and will be more glad than I shall be to be done with it."

"Hang it! I don't know what you mean by saying, I've made too much of it. I'm sure no one could have made less of it."

"Well, any way, there it is in black and white; there's the letter telling her plain enough how much she'll owe you if you don't set the thing right with your father."

"I promised to show it to her," Gower rejoined defensively, suspecting Fred now of a cunning design to keep May in ignorance of the letter.

"Of course you must show it to her; I should have to tell it to her myself if you didn't."

"But I'm not going to back out of it," Gower rejoined, almost defiantly.

"You may not wish to back out of it, but if she does, you can't well help yourself."

"Do you mean——" here he pulled himself up on the brink of again referring to their engagement—a reference he felt to be dangerous. "I must say, Beresford, that you needn't talk as if I had forced you to let me ruin myself to save you. I don't know what any fellow could have done more than I have done, and I didn't expect to have it flung back in my face like this."

"Flung back in your face! It's not into your face it has been flung, and yet you think I don't feel enough about it. It's just because I feel so much about it, that I can't stand it any longer. If it were not for May I shouldn't have allowed you to do it at all."

Fred thus sacrificing himself for his sister was rather a bewildering idea for Gower to take in. Nevertheless, before long he found himself entreating Fred to let the thing stand as it was, and consulting him as to the best way of persuading May to be of the same mind.

"There is only one way," Fred pronounced positively. "To make her believe that your father will hunt me down wherever I go. That will fetch her, if anything will. You needn't say that you've shown me the letter."

On this hint Gower spoke to May when he showed her the letter. As she read it, he said, by way of minimising the blow: "It was only what I expected, you know."

"But does your father really mean it?" she asked, looking up at him with wide and troubled eyes.

"There's no mistake about his meaning it."

"It's terrible!" May cried, judging Gower's filial feelings by her own. "What shall we do? I must see Fred."

"There's no use telling him about it," Gower replied. "It would only worry him for nothing. I shouldn't have shown the letter to you, if I hadn't promised to let you see it."

"But he ought to see it. He will not allow it; he cannot."

"He couldn't help himself, for he knows the sort of man my father is. He would hunt him down wherever he went. And then, there's your father to consider besides."

"Oh, what can we do? If father—Oh, I don't know what to do!"

"There's nothing to do, really. If there were, we might talk it over with your brother; but it's no good making him uncomfortable about it."

"You are generous; more than generous! But he ought to know of this; he could not accept it."

"He would not have only himself to consider—there's you and his father and mother; so he couldn't help himself, even if I would allow him to tell my father; but I wouldn't for anything—not for anything; and what's the use, then, of bothering him about it?"

Surely never was there such generosity, thought May; generosity of that highest kind that hardly knows itself, and will allow none else to know of it. Even his boyish mode of expressing it testified to its simplicity and sincerity, to her thinking; and Gower, as Fred had predicted, was at

once endued with those heroic attributes which May had ready in her mind to fit on the first knight of chivalry she might encounter.

When Gower went on to boast that there was an income of a thousand pounds a year which his father could not alienate from him, May, so far from thinking it a mere boast, imagined that he was only minimising the sacrifice he was making for her.

Yet, in spite of her growing idealisation and admiration of Gower, she was more wretched than ever in her engagement, which weighed upon her as a crushing debt which had just been doubled. When he ventured to-day, for the first time, to kiss her, her whole soul revolted with a shudder of disgust from the caress, and she immediately made some pretext to escape from the room.

She hurried upstairs to her own room, locked the door behind her, flung herself on her bed, and forgot everything, even Fred and her father, and their concern in this trouble, in her overwhelming misery at her own share in it.

At last she came to the conclusion that she must see Fred, and open out to him her whole heart, and confess that this life-long burden was more than she could bear.

As soon as she had reached this determination, she was startled by a knock at the door.

"Who is it?"

"It's I."

"Fred?"

"Yes, yes; open."

"What is it?" she asked, when she had opened the door. She thought that Fred had already pumped his news out of Gower, and had come to say that his friend's great sacrifice could not be accepted. "What is it?"

"Gower has had bad news from home," Fred replied excitedly.

"From—from his father?"

"About his father. He's dead!"

"Dead!"

She sank into the nearest chair, overcome utterly by the thought:

"This blow has killed him!"

Fred, perceiving that this was written in her ashy face and horror-seeing eyes, hastened to say:

"Yes; he's had a fit; but he's had them before, and it was touch-and-go last time."

As May still gazed up at him, or rather through him, or at some horror beyond, he added:

"It is as well that he didn't go off in it yesterday, when he got Gower's letter, or they would certainly have set it down to it."

"But don't you think——"

Here she stopped, unable to express the horror of her fear.

"That the letter had anything to do with it? I wish, May, you wouldn't suggest such a thing. How could it have anything to do with it? A shock doesn't wait till next day to give a man a fit."

"He doesn't think it?" she asked tremulously.

"Doesn't think what? He knows it had nothing to do with it, if you mean that. He has just said to me what I say: that it was well that it didn't happen yesterday, after he had got the letter."

This was not reassuring to May, with her idea of Gower's magnanimity.

"It must have been a terrible shock to him."

"Of course it was a shock to him; but he was in some degree prepared for it, as his father had an attack of the kind a month ago, and the doctor thought then that there was no hope for him. A second attack was certain to carry him off, and certain to come some time."

Nothing, however, could have convinced May that the blow was not a terrible one to Gower. Even supposing—which it was not possible for her to suppose—that the letter had had nothing to do with his death, still it must be a life-long pain to Gower to think that his father died with such unjust and unforgiving thoughts of him in his heart. What a debt, and what a reparation did they not owe him, did she especially not owe him, for all he suffered was for her sake! She must never again for a moment even think of recalling the promise of her hand—the alight and sole compensation he had asked.

Meanwhile Gower, do what he would, could not help thinking less of his father's death than of his will. Had he had time to alter it? His mind was so engrossed with this thought that, while on the way to the train, he indirectly sounded Fred for his opinion on the matter.

"He could hardly have been long ill?" he said interrogatively.

"Not many minutes, I should think, or you would have heard first of his illness."

"Not if—if he did what he said in that letter—about not sending for me."

"Oh, he never meant that; and any way they would have certainly sent before for you if it hadn't been very sudden."

"Perhaps it was Meldon upset him," Gower suggested, after a pause. Meldon was the family solicitor.

"There was hardly time for that," Fred replied, knowing the significance of the suggestion.

"He would send at once for him."

"But he could not get there till this morning at the earliest, and if he had been there when it happened, the telegram would have come from him." Evidently Fred's agitation had not prevented him thinking the question out for himself already.

"It would be terrible to think it had anything to do with it," Gower said presently, ashamed, not so much of his thoughts, as of Fred's reading them.

"How could it? It would have happened when he read your letter, if it had. I could never forgive myself if I thought that it had anything to do with it."

"Everyone will say it had."

"No one will know anything about it."

"Meldon will know. The whole house and place will know; he was sure to have talked of it. Look here, Beresford, you might send me a line setting me right, as it can do you no harm now."

"Of course, if you like; I suppose they'll not talk about it."

"I shall take care that they don't."

"I don't very much care for myself, but it wouldn't be pleasant hereafter for May, you know; and, besides, I would rather she thought you had let the thing stay as it is."

"I shall let it stay as it is, if it isn't all over the place," Gower rejoined petulantly, adding, however, almost apologetically: "I may have to live all my life among them, and it would be always coming up against me."

This recalled Fred to Gower's probable promotion, and the respect due thereto.

"So it would; you're quite right. I shall send you the letter to-night without saying anything about it to May; and, I say, you will write at once, like a good fellow, as I shall be wretched till I hear."

"I shall write to May to-night, of course."

"I shouldn't say anything to her, if I were you, about your—your prospects; not at first, I mean; that's why I asked you to write to me too," Fred suggested diffidently and deferentially.

"How do you mean?"

"She wouldn't expect you to think about that at first; she has such Quixotic notions."

YARMOUTH NOTES.*

WHEN an earnest student of the past takes to working out one single special vein of his subject, it is astonishing what a mine of wealth he often succeeds in bringing to light. And few topics promise the inquirer more abundant archæological results than local investigation by a resident explorer.

As every man has a biography, which, if completely known, would interest the world at large, so every town, however small, has its history, which, if carefully sifted, would reveal details of unsuspected importance, singularity, and suggestiveness.

Like almost every Great Yarmouth man, Mr. Frederick Danby Palmer loves his native town with the ardour and fidelity of a Swiss mountaineer. After having saved his Tolhouse† from destruction, and brought some of its secrets to the light of day, he now rescues a series of more recent events from being floated away along the stream of time.

The facts recorded, though not very old, are really invested with an artificial antiquity by the immense changes that have been effected during the last fifty years. It will be seen that they are sufficiently curious to deserve the trouble which Mr. Danby Palmer has taken in collecting them from the file of the "Norwich Mercury," for at that period Yarmouth possessed no journal of its own, but was dependent on Norwich for the publication of its local news.

It is pleasant to find, in records like these, the same names of representative families retaining their positions generation after generation. It is a proof that the stock must be good, to be able to hold its own persistently against the struggles for supremacy, if not for life, amidst the conflicts of race against race, to which it is now the fashion to attribute the vicissitudes of human fortunes. So far from giving way before invasion by outsiders, more than one of these names has acquired distinction in the metropolis.

If the evidence of our "Notes" may be relied on, Yarmouth people are not the people to obey the summons, "Get out of

the way, and let me take your place." They prefer MacMahon's declaration at the Malakoff, "J'y suis; j'y reste"—"Here I am, and here I remain."

Now that authors and artists are beginning to discover the charm and attraction of the Norfolk Broads, our "Notes" derive additional value from the fact that the harbour's mouth at Yarmouth is one of the portals leading to a region of quiet and secluded beauty, an almost unthreaded watery labyrinth, which, until quite recent years, remained almost unknown to the great excursionising British public. Yarmouth men of the period, and a few of their friends and neighbours, knew where and what it was, and enjoyed it—all the more no doubt, because they had it to themselves. Before long—who can tell when? next summer, perhaps—the wild-fowl will be startled and shocked by an ugly, gaudy, big Thames house-boat or two moored amidst its fringing reeds.

Let us begin at the beginning of our "Notes" with a good deed which threw its beams afar.

Every one who has walked along a low beach in stormy weather, must have observed the difficulty which a broad belt of boiling surf opposes to a safe landing on the shore. On January the second, 1830, the Norfolk Association for Preserving the Lives of Shipwrecked Mariners reports that an investigation had taken place as to the loss of seven men from the brig Hamond, and that as the lifeboat was not constructed with a view of affording aid to vessels immediately on the beach, Mr. Ambrose Palmer—one more good deed adorning the course of a long, useful, and honourable career—had most kindly offered to supply a boat for that purpose.

A week afterwards a less important but still good-natured act is recorded. The prisoners in the gaol returned thanks to Mr. Daniel Hook for the good dinner of "roast beef and plum-pudding and a quart of ale each," which he had given them on New Year's Day. But in 1839, such naughty benevolence was not allowed to pass without rebuke. Endeavours were made to put a stop to any ill-judged bestowal of cakes and ale. January the seventeenth.—The Poor Law Commissioners having complained of the Board of Guardians, because they had presented a Christmas dinner to the paupers, the Guardians justified such proceedings. Cakes and ale won.

But the deeds in our "Yarmouth Notes"

* "Yarmouth Notes." First Series, 1830—40. By Frederick Danby Palmer. Great Yarmouth: J. Buckle, 1887.

† See "The Yarmouth Tolhouse," ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. xxxv., p. 88.

are not all virtues. They range through a sliding scale of delinquency, some, at the time, not thought delinquent at all.

August the twenty-ninth, 1833.—On Tuesday and Wednesday the great annual main of cocks had been fought at the Bush Tavern, South Quay, between the gentlemen of Norwich and the gentlemen of Yarmouth, for five pounds a battle, and fifty pounds the odds, which was won by Norwich, who were six battles ahead.

July the eighteenth.—A fight had taken place, on the Factory Denes, for one sovereign, between Thomas Pardy, of Caister, commonly known as "The Caister Champion," and George Elliott, of Ingham. At the one hundred and thirty-third round (the battle lasted one hour and fifty minutes) Elliott was declared the victor.

Pugilism was reasonably cheap in those days, to give a nearly two-hours' mill for the small sum of twenty shillings. But it was for glory that they fought, and not for lucre.

In the previous year, May the thirty-first, the "Rights of Women" were enforced by "two female factory hands, aged respectively sixteen and seventeen, who had 'fought it out' on the Denes, the prize, a 'young tar,' when the 'shorter combatant' proved victorious." It is not stated whether the young tar's wishes were consulted in the matter, or whether he resignedly kissed and said good-bye to the taller combatant. He might have been wise to stick to his longer love, lest the short one, elated by conscious prowess, should give him, too, a drubbing, in case he failed to love, cherish, and obey her, to her liking. But the sequel of their adventures is not recorded; the thread of their story is broken and lost. As Alphonse Karr has said, there is no third volume in actual life.

When we have long enjoyed a great convenience, we cannot conceive people's getting on without it; and are, therefore, not surprised to read, April eighteenth, 1839, that a petition had been adopted in favour of a Penny Postage.

On July second of the following year, another great innovation was actually accomplished. The New Police had made their "maiden turn out" under Captain Love. Mr. J. Nolloth (a first-rate tailor) had supplied the uniforms.

A week afterwards, the reproach is flung in their face that "a fellow named Cullingford had cut down the door-stalls of Mr. William Sayer's house, on which

he was engaged nearly two hours without being detected by any of the New Police."

They were too fully occupied in strutting about in the Nolloth uniforms to pay attention to Mr. Sayer's door-stalls. Let us forget for once their excuseable weakness. Homer sometimes sleeps; the sun has spots. When the freshness of their uniforms wore off, the New Police were more wide-awake.

Contested elections could not help leaving their mark in our "Notes." We can only appreciate the following instance by asking what would be the chance of any candidate now who should argue that slaves were justifiable property.

In 1831, Colonel Anson and Mr. Rumbold were opposed by Mr. Colville and Mr. Bliss. T. Clowes, Esq., in proposing the first two gentlemen, adverted to the circumstance of Mr. Colville being a merchant connected with the West Indian trade, and a supporter of colonial slavery. Mr. Colville also spoke at length, amid much tumult, during which he was interrupted by loud yells of various kinds, attacking the Bill (Reform) for its disfranchising nature, and defending colonial slavery. He and his colleague lost their election, but, before the poll was closed, left the town. At which, the jubilant correspondent of the "Mercury" writes, "May Day became more than common exhilarating, by the agreeable information, quickly diffused through the town, that the enemies of freedom and of the constitution had fled, happy in evading and escaping from merited punishment; so irritated were the minds of the lower class of society against these obtruders, without a shadow of claim to their suffrages, that, by their flight on Sunday morning, they probably escaped an ablution in the waters of the beautiful river Yare."

At a subsequent election—1838—one thorough-going adherent, "a poor fellow who took some part in the election," entered so heartily into the game as to declare that, if Mr. Baring lost the election, he would hang himself. The poll closed at four, and he effectually hung himself and was cut down before five o'clock.

Communities and corporations in difficulty how to honour the Queen's Jubilee, might have taken hints from the celebration of her Coronation at Yarmouth. After various suggestions had been made and abandoned, Mr. Samuel Palmer moved: "That a subscription be entered into, to provide such amusements for the poor of

the town, as may seem fit to the subscribers."

Accordingly, on Thursday, the festivities began, but were interrupted by a heavy fall of rain. The remainder of the sports were postponed until Friday afternoon, when they recommenced at three o'clock, with most propitious weather and brilliant sunshine.

First came two chimney-sweeps in full costume. They dived in a tub of meal for pieces of money, which they picked out with their mouths. Numberless sneezings and many collisions of sooty heads, now, however, converted into floury nobs, took place during this match, to the great merriment of the assembled crowds. At length the money was all abstracted, and the performers, well washed, made their bows and retired from the stage.

Next came bobbing for oranges in tubs of water, by boys with their hands tied behind them. Then a singing match for boys, which was won by an urchin of the name of John Hutchin, who sung two comic songs with inimitable humour and effect. A hornpipe match followed, in which the best dancers made up by agility for what was wanting in grace and elegance. Grinning through horse-collars succeeded, and here one, Billy Derry, was successful.

Then we had six old women, drinking scalding hot tea for a prize of one sovereign. The efforts of these poor old creatures to gulp down the almost boiling fluid were at once both pitiable and ludicrous. But they appeared to enjoy the parts they were acting almost as much as the spectators, who gave way to the most uproarious laughter. They were all well rewarded for their exhibition.

There were also donkey races, climbing soaped poles, gingham matches (single combats with sticks or clubs), running wheelbarrows blindfold, a rowing match, and races after pigs with their tails soaped; and twenty-four barrels of ale were given away to the populace on the ground.

At half-past ten at night the Market Place was literally crammed with people to witness the display of fireworks, which was splendid, and worthy of the occasion, and concluded the Coronation amusements. Immediately after the fireworks had ceased the crowd dispersed, and by twelve o'clock the streets were as quiet as upon ordinary occasions.

Who says that Great Yarmouth was not a well-behaved town on that joyous evening!

AN UNNOTICED INCIDENT.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

THE spring, and summer, and autumn had passed monotonously, but more pleasantly, to Lisa than any time since the first few months of her marriage. It was winter now again, just a year since Dennis West had dropped so unexpectedly into her life, and in all that year his friendship had never failed her. He was away just now—something had gone wrong with his business affairs, and he had been spending the past week or two in looking after them.

It was cold, bright, frosty weather now, and Mr. Railton, who was certainly a hard-working man, was taking advantage of one of his rare holidays to give his family a day's skating. The children were all mustered in the hall, and Mr. Railton was looking them over to see if they were in every respect fit to go out with him.

"Lisa, look at that child's gloves."

Lisa looked.

"Put on your best gloves to-day, Paul!"

"I haven't got any best."

"Yes, dear, you have. Where are they? I bought you a pair a fortnight ago."

So she had; but Jane had been surreptitiously wearing them to school every day, and this was the result.

"I haven't any but these," Paul said stolidly, with a hazy notion that either he or Jane was in for a row, and that it had better be he, because Jane was only a girl.

"You naughty boy, you know I bought you a new pair. Where are they?"

"There, there, don't scold the poor child and spoil his day," said Mr. Railton fretfully. "I really think you might try to have the children decently dressed when I am going to take them out."

So it was mother who was in for the row after all. Well, mother was always in rows; still it seemed rough on mother that she should be scolded because they had not obeyed her.

When they reached Regent's Park, they found the ice bearing, and a good many skaters. The frost had not lasted long, and the Humane Society was in full force with all its apparatus. The sight of the ropes and ladders startled Lisa, and she timidly suggested that they should inquire which was the shallowest part. The shallowest part, however, proved to be also the most crowded; so Mr. Railton decided to try elsewhere, where only a few skaters were

disporting themselves, and, ten minutes later, they were all on the ice.

There is nothing like violent exercise for driving away low spirits, and there is no exercise more delightful than skating—so slight a motion of the muscles sends this heavy body, which drags so wearily on foot, flying lightly along, the fresh wind blowing in the face, the warm blood dancing and racing through all one's veins, in the intense enjoyment of motion, without the fatigue of motion. We rise to the level of a bird when skating, only, Mercury-like, our wings are on our feet.

Before long Mrs. Railton was enjoying herself thoroughly, and Mr. Railton laughing happily with the children. The children skated well, and did not need to be dragged about, which was fortunate, for Lisa would certainly have done most of the dragging; and, as it was, she was in a fair way to spend the afternoon very pleasantly indeed.

She watched her tall, stylish daughter skating about with her father, and thought how well they looked together. So did the younger ones as they dashed about in couples.

Lisa was the odd one of the party; but it did not occur to her to let that trouble her. Fresh people kept coming on the ice. She enjoyed watching almost as much as skating.

Presently, as she stood at the further end of the pond, her husband and children came skating towards her; they stopped as they neared her, and for a few moments they all stood in a group watching the rest of the skaters. A stalwart couple, both about six feet high, came skating clumsily, but happily, along, wavered, clutched wildly at each other, and fell. A few good-natured people rushed forward to assist them, when there was heard a resonant crack, and a long white line shot across the entire width of the pond. There was a chorus of "Ohs"—half laughter and half fear—and a general stampede for the shore. Mr. Railton was one of the first to move, but in a second he recollected, stopped, hesitated, then seized Kate in one hand, Paul in the other, and made for the bank, calling to the others to come on.

Lisa stood breathless. She had seen the pause, the consideration—"Which shall I save?"—and that she had been left, and the sight took away all desire and power to move. Next second, two strong arms seized her shoulders, and she was hurled, rather than drawn, into safety.

Every one stood silent on the bank, waiting to see the water bubble up through the crack. They did not see it. The ice looked as strong and as safe as ever, and presently people began to realise this and to feel foolish.

Lisa heard a low, jolly laugh, and, looking up at her rescuer, saw a big, black-bearded man, who took off his hat and began apologising for his unnecessary roughness.

"No danger whatever; the ice is just settling down. I suppose you knew that, and so didn't move. I thought you were too frightened to stir, and so I just shot you off. I hope I didn't hurt you; but I saw you were quite alone, and it took the disgrace off my own flight to rescue somebody."

He laughed again, and started on the ice once more, followed by several others.

"I say, he thought mother was alone!" said Paul. "If the ice had broken, and you hadn't got wet, I should have been glad he was there, wouldn't you, father?"

No one seemed disposed to follow Paul into these abstract speculations. Mr. Railton changed the subject abruptly, saying:

"Nonsense, don't let a little crack like that frighten you. Come along."

Mr. Railton was, perhaps, just a little ashamed of himself, and that made his tone all the harsher.

"I do not care to come."

"You can't stand about all alone in the cold. If you won't skate, you had better go home."

"I will go. Tell the children I am tired. I need not ask you to take care of them."

"I am sorry you are tired. Mind and take a good rest when you get home," and he skated after the children round the corner, leaving her on the bank.

A sudden turn brought her bearded rescuer to her. He saw her struggling with her skates, and stopped. A look of good-natured remorse overspread his handsome, kindly face, as he noticed her colourless lips and trembling hands.

"Going? Let me take your skates off, and let me apologise again. I can see I frightened you, though the crack didn't. Perhaps I hurt you; but we never have any ice in Ireland, so I don't understand it, and I really thought there was danger, and, as you were alone— Pray do not be angry with me."

He changed his sentence because he saw that for some reason his words troubled her,

and supposed that she resented his addressing her a second time; though, indeed, the veriest prude living could not have taken offence at his frank, impersonal manner. Lisa felt a sudden rush of emotion to think only a stranger should care to deprecate her anger.

"Indeed, I am not angry. I am very much obliged to you."

"Then I hurt you. You are looking as white as a ghost."

"No, not at all; indeed no, only I am tired, and not very well, so I am going home. Thank you," as he gave her her skates neatly strapped together, and she made an effort to look strong and independent as she walked up the low, steep bank.

"One moment," he said.

She turned.

"I'm waiting for my wife," he said, "but she won't scold me for making her wait when I tell her what I have been doing. You must let me see you home, or at least to the station."

"Oh, thank you; no, it is not in the least necessary."

"Not in the least," said another voice. "It seems I am come just in time to be of use, Lisa."

"Oh, Dennis, I am so glad to see you back again."

"That's all right, then," said the stranger cheerfully. "I can leave you with an easy conscience."

"Thank you, very much," said Lisa.

The stranger waited just a second, because, if the new-comer were the lady's brother or husband, it was only natural he would want to make some acknowledgment of his attention to her; and such was the frank cheerfulness of his manner that Dennis found himself instinctively murmuring some indistinct courtesy. Then he and Lisa walked towards the gate in silence.

Presently Lisa said:

"Don't you think he must be rather a nice husband?"

"Who?"

"Why, he; the gentleman who took off my skates. I was tired, and wanted to go home, and couldn't manage the straps."

"Didn't Donald know you wanted to go home?"

"Yes, of course I didn't go without telling him; but he was at the other side of the pond. I dare say he did not know I was going just at that moment."

Poor Lisa! between her sense of dis-

comfort at what she took for a rebuke in Dennis's tone, and her dislike of explaining her husband's neglect, she spoke very lamely.

But she was mistaken. The disapproval was not for her, for Dennis had reached the bridge a moment before the ice cracked, and had seen and understood the whole incident.

"I don't think it was exactly proper," she said, "but he only meant to be kind, because he saw, I mean thought, I was alone."

"You were alone," Dennis said abruptly. "When I am not with you, you are always alone. When will the others come back?"

"Oh, not until late; they are going to a little party after the skating. I had forgotten that."

And she remembered that no one had recalled it to her mind, or asked if she would not join them when she was rested.

They walked on in silence to the Marylebone Road; as they crossed it, a sickly hideous column of smoke rushed up through one of the ventilators to the Underground Railway.

"Oh, dear," she said, taking a deep breath of the clear, frosty air, "we have to go down among that to get home."

"We are not going home," said Dennis quietly, "we are going somewhere—anywhere, it does not matter; a picture-gallery will do."

"I think I should like it," said Lisa, hesitating. "I am not wanted at home; the children will not be back until the evening; and Donald will be quite late; and a picture-gallery will be such a pleasant change."

"That's it," said Dennis shortly. "It is time you had a change."

They walked on through the streets until they reached the gallery; but when they entered it, Dennis led her past all the pictures to a quiet seat, and signed to her to sit down. She looked up surprised.

"We came here to talk," he said shortly. "Lisa, I was on the bridge just now, and I saw all that happened."

She saw something in his face which she did not understand.

"Then—it is no use pretending any more!" she said.

"No; it is no use pretending any more. Lisa, all this year you have been pretending not to be wretched, and I have been

pretending to believe you. But I have known all the time how things were."

"Yes," she said. "I pretended to be satisfied when I thought you believed me; but that is no use now. It is often like that—nearly always when you are not here."

When he was not there! And he had come to tell her that he must go away for good. That was the news he had brought back from his three weeks of inspection. His losses had been so great, his affairs had become so involved, that nothing but his own presence could stave off ruin. He must tell her that he must leave her—almost at once—leave her now she had grown used to his friendship—leave her without a friend in the world, to bear her troubles alone.

Oh, Lisa! glad-hearted, bright-souled Lisa, were you only made for this—to wear out your life as the despised drudge of a man who has tired of you? And must the man who loved you as a child, and loves you now with a new love, so much more deep and tender than the old, leave you to bear your burden alone?

No, never. She had as good a right to love and happiness as any woman in the world. Why should she live this long, slow death, when he could give her far better things?

"You want to tell me something," she said. "Is it—is it that you are going sooner than you thought?"

"I am going at once."

She watched him with parted lips, waiting, perhaps guessing what was coming, for his voice had no sound of farewell in it.

"Lisa," he went on, "when I first came back I tried in my blundering way to show you that my childish love for my pretty tyrannical cousin was gone, outgrown."

"Yes, I understood; if it had not been so, you would not have come."

"I would not, Lisa. I came back to be your friend, and I stayed to be your friend, and I saw your sweetness, and your patience, and your suffering. And now I love you ten thousand times more than ever you were loved in your beautiful youth."

"Oh, my beautiful youth!" It was a cry of bitter regret for good things hopelessly past.

"There is no woman on earth more to be pitied than you. Your youth is gone, and your beauty is gone, and you have nothing instead of them."

"Why do you tell me?" she said wearily. "Do I not know?"

"Lisa," he went on, "some women have to bear poverty, and bear it because their husbands love them. Some have to bear neglect, but their lives are passed in ease, and they do not mind it; others who have neither love nor comfort have pride and pleasure in their children. What have you? I alone love you, why should you not love me? I alone want you, why may I not have you? Lisa, I swear to you that if your husband loved you, I should not; if there had been any hope in your life, I should have been content to have passed out of it in silence; but you know as well as I do, that the shock once over, no one will even miss you. Remember what happened just now."

It was true, she knew it. If she had died that day, she knew how little difference it would have made in her home.

"Your husband, whom you trusted in your youth, fails you now. Can you deny it?"

"No."

"And to which of your children can you turn, saying: 'This one at least will be the comfort of my age!'"

"To none of them."

"Lisa, will you come with me to-night, to Mergui?"

They stood facing each other, a few feet apart. There was no passion in their voices or their eyes. She only waited while he spoke his unalterable conviction.

"You have no idea what it will be like," he said. "Instead of your life here with its endless alights and loveless patience, instead of the burden which has worn your poor weak hands and bruised your dear true heart, you will have rest, and perpetual summer, and soft airs, and endless love and tenderness."

"I will come."

"We will go to-night," he said. "I have had news which makes it absolutely necessary that I should go at once. If you come with me, Donald will never guess where we are. He will not think I have gone to Mergui, because I have so often spoken of going there. He will think that was only a blind."

"I dare say."

"The train starts at 11.30. Will you come to my rooms? That will be better than your going to the station. Stations are so crowded. I should not like you to be in a crowded station at night."

"I will come."

"He—Donald, I mean—will not be back until late, you say? The steamer will have started before he finds out you are gone."

"I suppose so."

"Till to-night, then. We must part now. I have things to arrange. Do not be late."

"Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Lisa, my love. I will make you so happy."

"I hope so, I think so; and I should like to be happy before I die, and no one wants me here."

She rose as she spoke, and he put her into a cab at the door.

"Do not be later than eleven," he said.

"No."

She did not look up as the cab drove off, she sat as in a dream. So it was all over—the long, bitter, joyless struggle—she was going to be happy at last. One person in the world wanted her, she would go to him, and her place here would simply close up. No one would miss her; no one would even be surprised; whatever she did had always been displeasing. She had tried so hard to be good all these years, and what was the use?

The harassed servant showed no surprise as she re-entered, only inquiring if, since she had come home, she would clean the plate as she usually did on Wednesday afternoons. Lisa said, "Yes," and put on her apron to begin, laughing softly to herself as she polished the best tea-pot and the not very numerous spoons and forks, to think that she should never do such work again, for she was to be a drudge no longer, but a happy woman, loving and loved.

The time passed quickly, she was astonished to find how late it was. When the children returned from the party they were tired, which was fortunate, for it made them inclined to go to bed, and they went on her suggestion without any opposition. The eldest girl had stayed with her father. Lisa was annoyed and distressed, for grown-up parties and late hours were even more harmful for Kate than for most young girls. Then she recollected that nothing Kate did need concern her now. There was positive rest in the thought already.

Poor Lisa! A strong-minded, high-spirited woman would have known better, would have known the road she was taking had never yet proved the road to happiness. A wise woman would have seen the weakness of Dennis's arguments, would have understood better what she was doing. But poor Lisa was not wise and

had no strength of mind or will. That was not her fault.

Donald Railton had chosen a fool, and, having married her, had blunted her faculties, and dulled the little intelligence she had by neglect and harshness; so she had got into the way of doing what she was told when it was unpleasant, now she would do what she was told when it seemed very, very pleasant indeed. Who among her family could reproach her? Who of them deserved that she should still sacrifice herself to them?

It took her very little time to make her few preparations. It was a quarter to eleven as she stood on the landing ready. The door into the boys' bedroom stood open, the gas was still full on; mechanically she entered to turn it down. The youngest boy was in his crib; she passed by him almost carelessly. Paul lay asleep with one hand grasping a crumpled paper. There was a certain beauty in his stolid, chubby face after all. His mouth, too, looked actually pretty when it was shut.

"How I would have loved my children if they had cared about it," she murmured, standing over Paul's bed, and half-ashamed of offering unsought tenderness, she stooped and kissed him.

"Mother," he started awake suddenly, rubbing his eyes with his left hand. "Yes, it's mother," and he held out the crumpled paper towards her.

"What is this, Paul?" and unfolding it she saw two crushed macaroons in the last state of heat and stickiness.

"They're from the party. You didn't go, and I thought you'd like some."

"Paul, did you think of me at the party?"

"Yes, lots. I've been thinking a long time. I've been thinking——"

"What have you been thinking?"

"You're always doing things for us, and nobody is good to you but Dennis, and he's going away and there won't be anybody; so I am going to be always like Dennis to you."

Young as he was he was thoroughly English, and looked more ashamed of his good impulse than if he had been caught stealing jam. His mother was looking at him in eager wonder. He went on, mumbling his words, scarlet-faced, and rubbing his eyes with both hands now both were free.

"Father's always scolding you, and we bother you, and Tommy Brent's mother isn't half as nice as you; but they are all good to her, and we're horrid; but I won't be any more."

"My son, my son!" she cried, "do you understand what you say? You will not forget to-morrow? You are so young, you cannot understand."

She flung herself on her knees by the bed, gazing with piteous eagerness into his half awakened face, and, as she looked, "The soul of the child stood up in his eyes," and she knew it was no childish whim, but the beginning of a great joy for her.

He put his warm arms round her neck, and fell asleep there.

Ten minutes to eleven. She would soon be with him, and everything was ready. Dennis paced up and down his room in a fever of impatience, more miserable than ever he had been in his life. He had triumphed; that is, he had succeeded in making the woman he loved other than she might have been. She was worse, not better, for knowing him. He had persuaded her to do wrong in the hope that, together, they might find happiness; and his misery had begun already. Lisa, the patient, gentle saint, he had worshipped. He had made her no longer a saint. He, who had meant to be her best friend, was now her worst enemy. He had loved her for her purity, her sweet patience and endurance. What if he ceased to love her now he himself had destroyed those qualities! It would not astonish him. Nothing would astonish him that he found himself doing now. He had thought himself honourable and upright, and he was neither. He had thought himself a true friend to Lisa, and he was none. Now, when he thought himself a faithful lover, how could he tell that he was not mistaken? He felt himself so false and contemptible that no further discovery of baseness in himself would have surprised him. It grieved him to think that Lisa had trusted herself to one so contemptible. He remembered how he had always seen and known that certainly such actions as his ended in wretchedness. He quite believed that now. How could he trust his good intentions to Lisa, when those other good intentions had broken down? How could he be sure of his love when his friendship was such a miserable failure?

The clock struck eleven. He started. She must be here in a minute, and there would be no going back. The thing was done already.

Just then he heard the door open. He groaned and hid his face. He had realised his own fall already; now he knew that she, too, was in the mire with him.

"Telegram, sir."

It was the landlady who entered. Dennis took the envelope, and read the contents.

"Do not wait for me. I cannot come. Paul loves me. You have taught him to love me. Good-bye."

"Thank God!" he cried. "She is safe, and my spotless saint is spotless still."

Donald Railton is getting on in the world. He is in a fair way to become Attorney-General, and is more satisfied with himself than ever; he never knew what an escape he had had that December evening, which was as well, for he was incapable of understanding the story had he heard it. He noticed that his wife grew daily brighter and stronger, and probably thought that she was growing wiser as she grew older. The other children noticed that Paul never contradicted mother now; and, moreover, that he punched Will's head for so doing, and when his mother rebuked him for it, listened quietly, and said he would not do it again.

All this roused their astonishment at first, and then their respect. They grew to understand that mother had a champion now, and that the clever one of the family. They grew to see how eagerly their mother waited for Paul when he was out, and what a pleasure it was to Paul to tell all his news to her at the end of every day, until at last, they, too, began to change their manners, and to see all the beauty and loveableness of their mother's character. Kate, indeed, will always be her father's daughter, and none of them will ever be to Lisa what Paul is; he is her strength and her joy, something daily to thank God for. Satisfied with his love, her husband's bitter words grieve her no longer.

Now that she has a defence against them he has naturally ceased to speak them, and any advance he makes she meets much more than half-way. She has resolutely turned her back on the past, and life grows daily brighter and brighter.

But perhaps years hence, since Cousin Dennis will probably soon be married to the Consul's daughter, whose name has been so often in his letters lately, perhaps, when Paul speaks to her of some woman he loves, and whose love he has won, she will, in warning, tell him of that dangerous moment in her life, and show him a crushed cracker paper holding two crumbling macaroons.

HISTORIC SPANIELS.

"THE island of England breeds very valiant creatures, their mastiffs are of unmatchable courage," Shakespeare tells us in his *Henry the Fifth*, but the dog which has distinguished itself most in history is of Spanish origin. King Charles the Second first brought the little black and tan spaniel and his spotted-coated brother, the Blenheim, into high repute in this country. Pepys in his "Diary" states that the King's four-footed namesakes had unchallenged access into Whitehall, even on State occasions. In "*Royalty Restored*," we hear of a spaniel belonging to James the Second. When Duke of York, he wished to escape from the Palace where he was a State prisoner. To accustom his elders to his being out of their sight, he played hide-and-seek with his younger brother and sister for some weeks before his departure. On the night on which he had planned to leave, before going, "he disappeared behind the arras, but instead of hiding he hastened to his sister's chamber, where he locked up a favourite spaniel, that was in the habit of following his footsteps wherever he went." When its master was stealing down to the Thames, this would-be Stuart follower was howling in St. James's.

It was to a spaniel that the Prince of Orange, when fighting for the Dutch Republic, owed his life. The dog gave him timely warning when he was in imminent danger of assassination, and Motley adds, that ever after the Prince kept a dog of this species near his person. Louis the Fifteenth had a spaniel whose single-hearted devotion he ill requited. She was a gentle creature he had himself reared, and trained to starve rather than to take food from any hand but her King's. But when "Louis that was lay forsaken, a mass of abhorred clay," when the feet of his late servile courtiers were hastening through the galleries of Versailles to pay homage to the new King, there was no leal canine subject left to mourn over her dead master. The dog, whose absolute attachment the King had won, he deliberately shot in a fit of cold-blooded brutality. Barbier, in his journal, relates how "the King had this dog taken to his hunting lodge; he fired at her and wounded her. She ran and fawned upon him. He sent her from him a second time, fired at her again, and killed her."

Louis's daughters had some spaniels

which accompanied them on their flight from France when revolt had become revolution. Perhaps some descendant of the spaniel their father so cruelly killed, shared the sorrows, gladdened the journeyings of these Royal spinsters, "poor, ancient, withered women," as Carlyle calls them, "flying through hostile countries over tempestuous seas!" Their niece, Madame Royal, owned a spaniel, which began life, too, at Versailles. This little "Coco" as it was called, was with its unhappy girl mistress through all her trials, and four years was with her a prisoner in the Temple. Coco lived to leave France with the sorrow-weighted Princess, took shelter with her at Vienna, and the last we hear of the faithful adherent of this storm-tossed child of France, was that it was in her suite when the exiled French Court took refuge in Prussian Poland.

The Duc d'Enghien had a spaniel which passionately lamented over his death, and we wonder if Napoleon suffered any qualm of remorse when he read of it fiercely bemoaning its master's untimely fate in the moat at Vincennes. At the first halt the Duc d'Enghien's abductors made, their prisoner requested them to send back to Ettenheim for his "dog and his clothes." He did well to ask for his dog, for at Strasburg Napoleon had ordered that his friends and servants were to leave him. His dog, however, since it lacked "the divine power to speak words," was not included in the order. In the brief days of life which remained to him, this speechless friend was his only companion, went with him a prisoner to Paris, and entered Vincennes at his heels. On his arrival there he was depressed, and his dog sidled up to him, and Lamartine says, "The spaniel which he had kept at his side the whole route, rested his head on his master's knee." The dog beguiled him out of dark thoughts of his doleful prospects, his spirits rose, and he left the window, out of which he had been disconsolately staring, and called his dog to share his supper with him. The faithful creature was on guard beside him, when, one midnight, he was aroused from his sleep to appear before his judges. The Duke, sure of his innocence, went to the mockery of a trial, with sanguine hopes of a speedy release. He did not know that, during his trial, his grave was being dug. After leaving the judgement hall the prisoner, still unsuspecting of the haste to fulfil the sentence from which he expected

a pardon, was talking to Lieutenant Noiret, a soldier who had known his grandfather, the Prince of Condé. An historian says "he played with his dog" while chatting gaily to the soldier. The poor beast had been ill at ease, for some subtle instinct warned it that there was danger afoot. Its dull spirits were raised by its master's assurance; but it was but short-lived contentment, for the Duke and his dumb friend were soon parted by death. The prisoner was ordered to follow the commander down a darksome stairway, which led into the moat. The Duke hesitated; but the dog, as usual, followed without question at his master's heels. The Duke, when he reached the trench, realised the truth. He cut a lock of his hair, gave it and a ring to Noiret, to send to his betrothed, Princess Charlotte de Rohan. As three o'clock struck, the soldiers fired, and Napoleon's young victim fell. The spaniel, in the dim light—for it was a gloomy March morning, and the moat was lit by a solitary lantern—had not seen its master's face, and was unaware of his evil fate till it saw him dead. In vain it fawned upon him, who, but a few minutes previously, had stroked and commended his pleased favourite.

Then Lamartine tells how "his dog, which had followed him into the moat, yelled when he saw him fall, and threw himself on the body of his master. It was with difficulty that the poor animal could be torn from the spot and given to one of the Prince's servants, who took him to the Princess Charlotte—the only messenger from that tomb where slept the hapless victim whom she never ceased to deplore."

De Bourrienne, in his "Memoirs of Napoleon," says:

"The Prince had with him a little dog. The faithful animal constantly returned to the fatal scene. The eyes of passers-by rested upon the spot where the young victim had fallen, and admired the faithfulness of the poor dog. The police, ever uneasy, set this to rights. People were prohibited from passing that way; and the dog came no more to howl over the grave of his master."

We trust Lamartine was right, and the masterless dog was not left to mourn by the spot it knew too well, till the police, fearing it would excite pity, destroyed it. Princess Charlotte, it is said, had hastened to Paris in hopes of interceding for her handsome lover, so the poor spaniel would not have far to travel till it found a mistress ready to befriend

it. Whenever her thoughts strayed to the weed-covered grave in the moat, she would stroke the much-loved spaniel's head, as it rested on her knee, looking tenderly into its wistful brown eyes, remembering that they were the only friendly ones that had seen her hero die.

THE CROMWELLS.

OLIVER CROMWELL'S great grandfather was Morgan Williams, a Glamorganshire man. He married Katherine, daughter of Walter Cromwell, the smith (sometimes, therefore, called Walter Smith), whose son Thomas became—first, Wolsey's secretary, and then Henry the Eighth's Chancellor. The smith was also a fuller and woolstapler, and a brewer at Putney; while Williams to the brewing business joined that of inn-keeper. His son Richard, as soon as his uncle had risen to greatness, took the name of Cromwell, by way of ensuring the great man's favour. "Thy most bounden nephew," he calls himself; though what it was precisely that Thomas did for him, is not known. Perhaps his loudly expressed gratitude was only a sense of favours to come, which the great man's sudden fall prevented him from receiving. As one reads the Chancellor's life, one can not help wishing that Williams had not changed his name. For Thomas was not a credit either to the age in which he lived, or to the stock of which he came. He was a "ruffian in his young days," as he used to tell Archbishop Cranmer. There were family jars. In the Court Rolls of Wimbledon Manor we find Richard Williams, who afterwards became the "most bounden nephew," prosecuted for assaulting and battering Thomas Cromwell, and fined sixpence. Walter Cromwell had taken to tippling, and got into debt, and to save himself, had to sell his Putney copyhold to his son-in-law Morgan. Thomas turned his back upon his family and went abroad, enlisting in Italy in the French service, and yet managing to do a good stroke of business as clerk to the English merchants at Antwerp, and as agent to a Boston guild of "Our Lady." This guild wanted to choose their own Confessor, to relax the Lenten rules, and to be allowed to carry portable altars. Cromwell undertook to get leave from the Pope; and having no powerful friends to secure him an audience, he waylaid His Holiness as he was coming in from hunt-

ing, and gave him some choice English sweetmeats, introducing the gift with a glee or "three-man song," after the English fashion of the day.

He very soon got the required leave; and after some stay in Venice as book-keeper to a big merchant, he came home, took to the fulling business, and through his Italian connections was able to greatly extend it, for English wool was prized abroad; and it was soon no unusual sight to see a foreign trader dropping down the river with a boat-load of wool purchased at Cromwell's stores. But he soon felt Putney too small for him, and moved to Austin Friars; and there managed to attract Wolsey's notice, and to get made collector of his revenues. Wolsey put him into Parliament; and his maiden speech (still extant) began by positively declaring that every one would give ten thousand lives (if he could) to win back France for the King, but ending by politically urging the subjection of Scotland as a first step. Shakespeare's line in Henry the Fifth about "the weasel Scot" is expressed almost in Cromwell's own words. He had now got well into the saddle; and as to a singularly captivating manner he joined good business capacity and a wonderful memory he throve exceedingly in the composite trade of wool-dresser, money-lender, and lawyer.

In 1525 Wolsey used him and two others for the work of suppressing the lesser monasteries. Wolsey's object was a grand one; he wanted to endow two great colleges at Ipswich and Oxford. Christ Church, Oxford, was afterwards founded on the ruins of his Cardinal College; but the endowments he gave to Ipswich were all made away with by the King. About the lesser monasteries it is impossible to get at the truth. Some of them may have been "nests of debauchery"; respecting some, the charges brought by the Commissioners were notoriously false; a good many were probably "retreats" where "younger sons" (and daughters) who had not energy to face life's battle, passed a comfortable existence, employing a lot of labour as serving brothers and sisters, and treating their tenants very leniently. Certain it is their suppression was very unpopular, as it could not fail to be. The tenants found it indeed a change for the worse when, instead of a good-natured Prior or Abbeſs on the spot, they had to deal with a hard lawyer, steward to an absentee nobleman or to a college hundreds of miles

off; the servants would not be well pleased at losing what was a berth for life. What gave bitterness to the thing was: first, the infamous charges; next, the moral torture applied to make monks and nuns incriminate themselves; lastly, the basely unscrupulous greed of the Commissioners.

One of the three, Allen, afterwards made Archbishop of Dublin—a likely man he to convert the Irish to Protestantism!—was a fellow with whom an average burglar would have refused to shake hands. And Cromwell's conduct was almost equally scandalous.

Just after this Wolsey fell; he could not make up his mind to the Divorce, and nothing less would please Henry and Anne. How did Cromwell act? Shakespeare credits him with rare fidelity; and he certainly defended Wolsey in the House of Commons—"mine only aider," was Wolsey's style in several letters to him just then. But Cavendish, Wolsey's secretary, did not dream of calling him disinterested. He had been Wolsey's agent in suppressing the monasteries; therefore it was to his interest to try to disprove charges which told against him as severely as they did against his master. His one aim was to quash an inquiry; whereas Wolsey was single-minded—had simply sought for funds for his educational work. Cromwell, his jackal, had devoured the choicest bits before handing over the prey to the lion.

When Wolsey, ruined, had to turn off his servants without payment, Cromwell gave five pounds towards a subscription for making up their wages. The report of his fidelity, helped no doubt by his having been known as the adviser of a wholesale system of bribery, brought him rapidly into the sunshine of Court favour. In a few weeks after his master's fall, it was reported that he was to go abroad in the suite of Anne's father, on an embassy to the Emperor! Having once got the King's ear, he plied him with promises. "He would make him the richest King that ever was in England; and as to the Divorce, he blamed roundly the timidity of the royal councillors. They seemed to think princes bound by the same principles as private people. A King is above the laws, for he has the power to change them; and in this case he has the law of God in his favour. Let him declare himself to be Head of the Church in his own realm and wait no longer on the Pope's pleasure."

Cromwell had evidently caught in a bad form that moral epidemic of Machiavellism which was the curse of almost every Tudor

statesman. Once, when he was talking with Pole, the question came up: "What is a prudent councillor's duty to his Prince?"

"Above all things to consider his master's honour," said Pole.

"Nay," retorted Cromwell; "that stuff about honour and expediency is well enough for a disputation in the schools, but Princes relish it not. The prudent man will make his master's inclination his first study. You had best read a book, 'The Prince,' whereof I've brought a written copy from Italy." But Pole declined to read anything that went against that sense of honour which for him was synonymous with duty.

From that day the two men parted company; and before long Pole thought Cromwell's rapidly growing power so dangerous for him, that he went abroad. One great plan for enriching the King was—besides the confiscation of Abbey lands—to force Bishops to exchange the richest manors of their sees for very much poorer pieces of Crown-land. For enriching himself he regularly took bribes for pushing suitors' interests in the King's Courts. How wholly unscrupulous he was is seen from his having, when he purchased some land in Austin Friars, removed the landmark twenty-two feet too far into his neighbours' gardens, and actually wheeled away on rollers the house of Stow's father—Stow tells the story—without the slightest warning. As for compensation, that from such a powerful man was not to be looked for. At this time (1533) he was Privy Councillor, King's Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Master of the Jewels, Clerk of the Hanaper, besides—though a layman—Dean of Wells, and Rector of a Wiltshire parish.

His unpopularity grew with his power; the Commons hated him for "revealing their deliberations to the King." To the Princess Mary (whom some said he meant to marry, and so get the crown for himself), he was simply brutal. When Anne Boleyn died, the poor neglected girl hoped that the King her father would somewhat soften towards her. She wrote several letters; Cromwell rejected them all, and at last forced her to confess under her own hand that she was a bastard, and that her mother's marriage was incestuous! To Bishop Fisher he was equally brutal—aggravated in every possible way the frivolous charge of treason against an old man almost at death's door. Indeed, when More and Fisher were in the Tower,

he repeatedly visited them to try to get out of them fresh matters for indictment. Anne Boleyn, when she knelt protesting her innocence, he treated with the most cynical hardness; while his "visitation" of the greater monasteries, with a view to suppressing them also, was even worse than the way in which he had treated the lesser. He had not John Knox's excuse of earnestness; he was still, as far as he had any religion, a Catholic. His grand principle was the Royal Supremacy; and any Catholic who disputed that, was punished as ruthlessly as was any one who denied transubstantiation. It was by his advice that Henry gave away, or sold for a mere song, the greater part of the Abbey lands, thus making the new nobility, whom he had created, sharers in the confiscation. No wonder that in every rising the first demand was for such an "ill-adviser" (as they called him) to be removed; and no wonder the King whom he served stuck by him; he was too useful to be sacrificed. Yet, though he got more and more rewards—all the lands of Lewes Priory (the mother of all our Cistercian foundations) and those of Colchester, and Launde, and Saint Oysth's Abbeys; the wardenship of the King's forests north of Trent, the captaincy of Leeds Castle, Kent, and of Carisbrook, etc.—he never won the King's respect. "The King," says an eye-witness, "beknaveth him twice a week, and sometimes knocks him well about the pate; and yet when he hath been well pomelled and shaken up, he will come out of the great chamber as it were a dog shaking of the bushe, with as merry a countenance as though he might rule all the roast." Why did he fall all in a moment the year after he had been made Lord Privy Seal and Lord High Chamberlain? Henry Tudor had no English instincts; he hated the old nobility—they could not be "beknaved and knocked about the pate." Cromwell served his turn, he could treat him like the low fellow that he was; but, incapable of gratitude or common kindness, as soon as he had got all he could out of him, he flung him out to be torn in pieces by his enemies. "Ah, it was all because Ann of Cleves was so disgustingly unattractive." Cromwell had negotiated the marriage with her, and in return had been made Earl of Essex. Well, doubtless that had something to do with it; but State policy also weighed against him. Henry had got all that he could out of the alliance with the Protestant Princes, to which the marriage

with Ann was the seal, and therefore he could do without the man to whom that alliance was due. So the Duke of Norfolk, who had long trembled before him, and who hated him as a Howard would who was forced to tremble before the son of Walter the smith, impeached him at the Council Table. He was at once sent to the Tower; and the Lords, without a dissentient voice, passed a Bill of Attainder, and the Commons did the same—for under Henry, one House vied with the other in abject servility. Cranmer timidly pleaded for him with the King; but all Henry thought of was to get some evidence which would enable him to lower Ann's pension. Cromwell gave what was asked for, and wound up his letter with: "Most Gracious Prince, I cry mercy, mercy, mercy." But the King would not stir a finger to save him; all he did was not to include his son Gregory in the attainder. So the son succeeded him as Baron Cromwell of Oakham; and his son, husband to Jane Seymour's sister, sold his land and joined James the First's Plantation in Ulster. He got a big estate in County Down, and his son was made Earl of Ardglass.

The only two good things Thomas Cromwell did were to order a big Bible to be chained up in every church, and to insist on parish registers being kept (1538), after the fashion which Cardinal Ximenes had started in Spain. He was as masterful a man as his great namesake and distant kinsman. Meeting a serving-man wearing his hair long on his shoulders, he asked him:

"Sirrah, how dare you wear your hair that fashion?"

"An't please your worship, I'm under a vow," replied the man.

"Well, fellow, I will not have thee break thy vow; but thou shalt stay in prison till it is fulfilled."

Of that namesake there is not space to say much. His mother was a Steward. Her family had for generations farmed the tithes of Ely Abbey; but there is not the least ground for saying that she was connected with the Blood Royal of Scotland. Though he is said to have been idle at college, "taking more delight in horse and field exercise, and in football, cudgels, and other boisterous sport," yet he could talk Latin with foreign ambassadors. He got the title of "Lord of the Fen," because he insisted that the poor commoners' rights should be respected during the drainage. In the House—where he sat, in 1640, for

Cambridge—"he was very much hearkened to, for all that he was very ordinarily apparelled." In 1642 he subscribed six hundred pounds, poor though he was, for the recovery of Ireland, and five hundred pounds for the defence of the Parliament, besides one hundred for arming Cambridge-shire and securing the magazine in Cambridge town and preventing the College plate from going to the King. Even as early as Edgehill, his men were models of steadiness.

"He and his troop," says Fiennes, "never stirred, but fought to the last minute." His plan was "to get men of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go."

The strange thing is that, though many tried to fill their regiments with pious men, he alone succeeded. He began by having the right sort of officers.

"If you choose," wrote he, "godly, honest men to be captains of horse, honest men will follow them. I had rather have a plain russet coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than what you call a gentleman and nothing else. . . . It had been well that men of honour and birth had entered into these employments; but, seeing the work must go on, better plain men than none."

The speed with which he rose from plain captain to be Manchester's second in command, was a case of merit pushing to the front. His chief difficulties were financial. Local funds ought to have been forthcoming to pay his troops; but they were always in default.

"Lay not too much," wrote Cromwell to one committee, "on the back of a poor gentleman who desires, without much noise, to lay down his life and bleed the last drop to serve the cause and you."

At Marston Moor—where his men "had a hard pull of it, for they were charged by Rupert's bravest, both in front and flank, they stood at sword's point a pretty while, hacking one another; but at last he broke through them scattering them like a little dust"—he was wounded in the neck, and would have been driven back but for the gallant support of Leslie and what Cromwell very ungratefully calls "a few Scots in our rear."

Major Harrison strongly asserts that Leslie was the real leader, "Cromwell not having been so much as present in the decisive charge," and says it was the Independents "who glorified him and his unspeakably valorous regiments," for their

own end. Rupert, however, nicknamed him "Ironside," and Leslie waived in his favour the lieutenant-generalship. Anyhow, this victory made him not merely a lieutenant-general, but the head of a party; for he was the very opposite of Washington, and turned his camp—as a Presbyterian complained—"into a mere Amsterdam" (a preaching place for men of all views).

Cromwell and Crawford nearly came to fighting in 1644, because the latter cashiered a Colonel for preaching Anabaptism.

"Admit he did," wrote Cromwell, "shall that render him incapable to serve the public? Sir, the State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies." Toleration this, which nobody else in those days even pretended to practise, and which he himself failed to show to Quakers and Catholics, Fifth-Monarchy Men and Levellers.

Of noblemen he was less tolerant. Why did he quarrel with Manchester and go aside (in 1644) with Vane and the others who thought Charles must be deposed before anything else could be done? Was it ambition? Had he a glimpse of the future, such as it really did turn out? He certainly began to talk strangely, considering he was serving along with Manchester, and Fairfax, and other nobles. "I hope to live to see never a nobleman in England," he wrote. Or was it conscience, sharpened by a very cordial dislike of the Scots, who naturally did not wish to put down a King who belonged to them more than he did to the English?

Probably he really believed that Manchester was incapable, and that the only thing was to push on the war with far more vigour than any of the old commanders were capable of.

Baxter places what he and Ludlow call Cromwell's apostasy a good deal later than this. "Cromwell," says he, "meant honestly in the main, and was pious and conscionable in the main course of his life, till prosperity and success corrupted him; then his religious zeal gave way to ambition."

It was early in 1647, after "the Self-denying Ordinance," after Naseby—where Cromwell foresaw a victory; "I could not smile out to God in praises because He would by the things that are not, even by our poor ignorant men, bring to nought things that are"—that the army and Parliament began to quarrel. Cromwell would have been arrested had he not gone to the camp. Parliament was furious.

Lilburn wrote: "You have robbed by your unjust subtlety and shifting tricks, the honest and gallant agitators of all their power, and solely placed it in a thing called a council of war." Then followed the first "purging" of the House, of the eleven who persistently accused him of underhand dealings with Charles, of intriguing to be made Earl of Essex, and Knight of the Garter, etc.; and from this it was but a step to that final "purging" when, just as Parliament was going to disband the army, in he walked, and said: "I am come to do what grieves me to the soul, and what I have earnestly with tears prayed to God against. Nay, I had rather be torn in pieces than do it; but there is a necessity laid upon me therein, in order to the glory of God, and the good of the nation."

Then he sat down, and waited while Vane made an eloquent harangue; and then, as the Speaker was going to put it to the vote, he burst out with: "Your time is come. The Lord hath done with you; He hath chosen other instruments that are more worthy. He hath taken me by the hand, and set me on to do this thing." Wentworth cried out, the House "could not suffer such language from our servant, whom we, by our unprecedented bounty, have made what he is."

But Cromwell called in his musketeers, and, pointing to the Speaker, said: "Fetch him down!" A notice, "this house to be let unfurnished," was stuck on the door.

What would he do now? The Royalists expected he would bring back Charles the Second, and be content with a Dukedom, and the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. Fifth-Monarchy Men thought that with his triumph would begin the millennium, the reign of the saints; and they were cruelly disillusioned when they found the world continued to be made up as before, of rich and poor, saints and sinners, the only difference being that the new majors-general governed instead of the old magistrates. Hence, in all the plots, Royalists and Levellers worked together, and suffered in common; both were equally incensed at that idea of making Cromwell King.

Thenceforward, his career, however glorious abroad, was marred at home by frequent "purgings" and dissolutions. Even the few members whom he left would never fairly stand by him, but kept trying—ridiculously, seeing that they had nothing to back them but smouldering Cavalier disaffection—to restrict his au-

thority. He would have no Parliament. Then came legal resistance. Whitelock and Widdrington resigned the Great Seal rather than regulate the Court of Chancery. Two judges refused to act on a commission for trying insurrectionists. A merchant refused to pay duties not imposed by Parliament, and Chief Justice Rolle resigned rather than enforce the payment. Thenceforward Cromwell relied more and more on sheer force.

Calamy, the preacher, said to him: "Tis against the voice of the nation. There will be nine in ten against you."

"Very well," replied he, "but what if I disarm the nine, and put a sword in the tenth man's hand, would not that do the business?"

He was obliged, however, in 1656, to summon another Parliament, which urged him to accept the Kingly title. He refused.

"I do judge for myself that the other names may do as well. 'Tis but a feather in the hat, a shining bauble for crowds to gaze at or kneel to." He knew that the army, almost to a man, was against it; the wonder is how, four years later, they could have permitted the restoration of all they had fought to overthrow.

On Cromwell's character do not believe either Hume or Carlyle, but read "The Squire Papers" discovered since Carlyle, and remember, in summing up, that truth lies generally in the mean. What became of his body has, of late, been a question. A Frenchman, Sorbière, travelling in England in 1663, heard that Cromwell had the royal tombs in the Abbey opened and the bodies transposed, so that it could not be known where he was laid. Fancy Royal James doing duty on the gallows, to which Captain Titus's motion consigned the dead regicides. "It troubled many," said Pepys, "that a man of so great courage should have that dishonour done to him, though otherwise he might deserve it well enough." Others said that by Cromwell's last orders his body was secretly conveyed away and buried at night on Naseby field, "where he had gotten the greatest victory and glory."

How his son Richard—"Queen Dick" the Royalists nicknamed him, because of the gentleness which led Haslerig to say: "The sweetness of his voice and language win my heart. If you think of any single person, I'd sooner have him than any man alive"—lost the reins, was because, as before, Parliament and army were quarrelling, and he was not strong enough to

keep them in their places. "Gentle and virtuous, but became not greatness," is Mrs. Hutchinson's verdict on the man who "was not one sixpence the better or richer for being the son of his father." The strangest thing is that the French, who were intriguing for a Restoration, repeatedly offered to re-establish him as Protector. He refused, "either because his heart failed him, or because his friends would not expose themselves to the chances of a civil war." Henry, more energetic than Richard, said, in 1659: "Any extreme is more tolerable than returning to Charles Stuart. Other disasters are temporary, and may be mended; these not." Yet, a year later, receiving no instructions from Richard—he was in Ireland—he forwarded his submission. His English estates were forfeited; but as several Royalists exerted themselves in his favour, he was allowed to retain what he had bought in Ireland.* Yet even this, though confirmed by the Act of Settlement, was seized from his children by the Clanrickardes. This very Woodford property, which has been so much talked of, should belong not to the Bourkes, but to the Cromwells.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER XX.

"A GREY DISCOURAGED SKY OVERHEAD, THE SHORT LAST DAYLIGHT OF DECEMBER."

"VERY unfeeling and very idiotic! Poor Aunt Flo! Which of us is which, I wonder?" said Celia, and she laughed.

There had been a few moments of painful silence, which she bore till she could bear it no longer. There they were alone together, Paul and she, in the smart little desolate room which had been so often given up to them lately, and where Paul, at least, had spent so many happy quarters of an hour.

Many of M. Dupont's rooms were furnished with spoils of old houses in the Faubourg; white and gold chairs, with lovely brocaded cushions; mirrors, clocks, candlesticks, in the most elegant rooco style. Mrs. Percival's rooms were among the prettiest in the hotel. Celia at this

* From the soldiers, many of whom were glad to sell the land they received as pay, instead of settling down in a strange country.

moment was leaning back in an arm-chair the curves and colouring of which would have delighted a connoisseur, and white and gold Cupids danced up the frame of the mirror in which Paul's head was reflected, as he stood before the fireplace. The proceeds of a long day's shopping were piled on the floor; there was no fire, and the room was cold: Celia wrapped her cloak more closely round her, and tapped impatiently with her foot upon the ground.

"Well, Paul!" she said, as he stood unmoved before her.

"Suppose we say that you are unfeeling, and I am idiotic," he answered quietly.

His whole tone and manner had altered so completely, he had so utterly ceased to be himself, that Celia wrinkled her brows and gazed at him in astonishment. This was not her adoring young lover, this was not the affectionate, generous, trusting boy who had written her that last letter full of wonder and perplexity. He had been puzzled by that mysterious letter of hers; but it had not interfered with his love, hardly with his confidence. What had happened since to make this change?

Instinct told Celia that for some strange reason she had lost her power, and yet she could hardly believe it, and at that moment all her thoughts and wishes were bent on having it back again. Not that she loved Paul, but she liked him to love her; she was very unwilling to lose his romantic worship, and the promise of a life of wealth, indulgence, and liberty. But what was she to do with a young man who would not even look at her, standing there like a stone!

"I don't think I am unfeeling," she said. "I wrote to you last night; but, of course, tearing off like this, you did not get the letter."

"What did you say?"

"I asked you to come back. If I had known what you would be like, when you did come—I think I might have asked you to stay in England. Certainly I should not have said all I did say."

"Will you answer me one question, Celia?" he said; and then he lifted his head and looked at her, with such wistful, sleepless melancholy in his eyes, that almost any woman would have been touched by it. Celia was, in her way; she saw that she had brought this shadow on Paul, and believed that she could clear it away—if she only knew all that was in his mind. An unworthy suspicion flashed across her

brain; perhaps he had shown that letter to the Colonel before he died, or to some other odious person who had taken the worst view of it.

She pointed to the chair beside her.

"Come and sit here," she said. "I will answer any questions you like."

"Thanks; I'd rather stand," said Paul. "That letter you sent me—it was written to somebody else, wasn't it? Not meant for me at all?"

"Who put that into your head?" said Celia; and in spite of herself her eyes fell, and she blushed crimson again.

"Nobody; I thought of it myself," said Paul. "There was no name, and I naturally read the letter several times, trying to find out the meaning of it. Then that occurred to me—which of course makes all clear. Under the circumstances, you will forgive me for reading the letter. Here it is. I have brought it back to you."

He came across the room, laid the letter on her lap, and went back to his place on the hearth-rug. She instantly tore the letter into several pieces and threw them on the ground.

Then Paul was really cruel. He said:

"I thought you would not send it now. You can write a different one."

"I never meant to send it at all," she said, in a half-choked voice. "Of course it was a most awful mistake sending it to you; but I was in a great hurry."

"As you wrote it, the best thing you could do was to send it to me," said Paul. "Seeing may be painful, but one would rather not be kept blind."

"But let me explain."

"I really don't want any more explanation," he said. "Don't you think, yourself, that we understand each other well enough now? I did not hope for any explanation; it was all too clear. I only came to say good-bye."

Celia sat perfectly still, looking down at her torn letter. Paul turned half away, resting his arm on the chimney-piece; but this was only for a minute. He suddenly straightened himself up, drew a long breath, looked at her with the same pain in his eyes, and said in a low voice:

"Well, good-bye!"

Then Celia made a great effort. For the sake of bringing him back, she conquered her pride, her anger, and other feelings too. She got up, came quickly to him where he stood, laid her hand in his and her head against his shoulder.

"Not good-bye to me, Paul?" she said.

He looked down for an instant into her lovely face; and then, rather wildly, away from her. He did not even let his fingers close on hers, but said very low, between his teeth:

"How can you—when you know—that I know. And it has been always like this!"

Celia stepped back from him to a little sofa close by, and sat down there, clasping her hands, and looking up at him imploringly.

"Oh, Paul," she whispered, "I was so poor; and you were so good to me. It was the first and last and only letter—I said that, didn't I? I had to write to him, don't you see, because he wanted me to break off my engagement. I never meant to do that."

"No," said Paul. "You said you were not brave enough."

"I couldn't help it. I wish I had never seen him. Indeed, I never flirted with him, or brought it on myself in any way. The only wrong thing I have done was to scribble that letter; and I did not mean to send it. I meant to write another, quite a cold one, that you, or anybody in the world might have read. I really was angry with him for writing to me, when he might have known it was of no use. Paul, forget that nonsensical letter. I did not mean half I said in it. Paul, I want you to forgive me. Why have you changed in this dreadful way? But of course it must be as you please."

The tears were running down Celia's face, but Paul would not look at her.

"I suppose it is Vincent Percival?" he said; and then he threw himself into a low chair, and hid his face in his arms on the end of the sofa.

"Yes," said Celia more steadily. "He was foolish enough to fall in love with me last summer; but he did not know I was engaged. Aunt Flo and I never mean to have a secret again. It was very tiresome—just the last day—when you were there too. If you had not been so good, and generous, and angelic, I don't know what I should have done—at least, there might have been some sort of row, for I never dreamed, Paul—I never dreamed of throwing you over for him. Still, it is too true that you have never really understood me. Haven't I told you so? haven't I told you that some day you would find me out, and think me a fiend?"

"I don't think you a fiend," said Paul.

"But I see that you never have cared for me, and never will. If we marry we shall be two unhappy people. And there are circumstances—you will know some day—which make me feel justified in telling you so."

"But, Paul," she said, "I don't think we should be unhappy. I will be very good, and I do like you to care for me, you know. If this horrid accident had not come to part us, you would never have thought of it."

"No, because I believed—however, I know I am doing what is right for us both," he said.

"Very well; as you please; I can say no more," said Celia. "You can't bear the truth, and you can't forgive; as for me, I can't go on excusing myself for ever. Good-bye, then."

She made a little movement, but did not actually get up from the sofa. Looking at the dark, bent head so near her, the strange creature almost felt as if she really cared for Paul. She lifted her hand, as if she meant to touch his hair, but quickly dropped it again, for he looked up and began to speak.

"I will not marry a woman who only cares for my money. You have said so plainly, though you meant to deceive me to the end. Perhaps it was not your fault. As for Vincent—he is a villain."

"Speak against me as much as you like, but don't tell any one about him. Remember that it is my secret, and you only found it out by accident. I can trust you, can't I?"

"I am not likely to talk about you or him," said Paul. "This is no one's business except yours and mine."

"I am afraid——" said Celia hesitating. "I think, don't you, that Aunt Flo and Uncle Tom will want to know the meaning of it?"

"Well, you can't tell them the truth, of course," said Paul, rather bitterly. "Say what you please. Say that I am too stupid for you, and that you can't stand me any longer."

"If I can't tell the truth I need not invent fresh lies," said Celia, and she laughed. "Besides, it would be no use, for they wouldn't believe me. Aunt Flo knows me too well; she won't give me credit for all that romantic impatience. They will be in an awful state, of course; and they will think you a very changeable person. I really don't know what Uncle Tom will say."

Paul lifted his head. He was very pale, and frowning. It had not occurred to him before that Canon and Mrs. Percival would think his behaviour dishonourable; and of course it was utterly impossible for him to justify himself by betraying Celia. He began to see that, after all, the matter was in her hands more than in his own. His brain, half confused by grief and sleeplessness, began to wake to the fact that he was putting himself and Celia in an extremely awkward position. And Celia, meanwhile, sat looking across the room at those boxes and parcels piled against the wall. Paul was obliged to remember, as his eyes followed hers, that marriage, after all, involves a good deal besides sentiment, or even passion.

At the same time, he knew that he could tell Celia something which would probably change her views and reduce his own importance immensely. He understood her well enough now; how could he help it? She had bared her soul, poor thing, in that letter, every word of which seemed to burn before his eyes. Riches, comfort, indulgence—these were all the things she cared for in life; for these she meant to marry him; she would not have given up these for Vincent, the only man, it seemed, who had ever touched her heart at all. Paul knew very well that if he could say to her, "You are rich yourself; money is nothing to you. Colonel Ward has left you seventy thousand pounds," he would gain his freedom without any further argument. But he could not say it; he could not stand there and watch Celia, the woman he had so loved and honoured, while she degraded herself still further in his eyes.

It may be said that Paul was absurdly high-flown, refined, and idealistic; but we must remember that he was a "muff," a rather peculiar, old-fashioned young man, knowing little of the world and of women, brought up chiefly in a solitary place, shy, and not easily making friends of his own age, very much guided by the tastes and opinions of the one dear old friend who had now left him. We are quite ready to acknowledge that there are not many characters like Paul; neither are there many people who can understand him when they meet him.

He left his chair—somehow it was too near Celia—and went back and stood on the hearth-rug, looking down at the floor. She turned her head towards him, and watched him with shining eyes; she was trying very hard, still, to think of some

means that would bring him back to her. She half despised herself, too, being conscious that a girl with any real pride would not have borne so many repulses, but would have left him long ago. "Oh, bother pride!" thought Celia to herself. "I can't afford any nonsense of that sort. Three more years, at least, to hang about at Woolborough, depending on Aunt Flo—and then, if I do go to India, very soon to be something rather like a black slave—no, Paul, I can't let you leave me to that, I can't really."

After a minute or two she followed Paul to the fire-place, standing near him with her hand on the chimney-piece, and looking up into his face.

"So it wasn't me that you loved," she said, in a very low voice—"only the girl you thought me!"

"How could I help it?" said Paul quickly.

"Do you suppose that people ever really know each other?" she went on. "There must always be a lot of faults—a lot of hidden ones. You never can read a person's character like a book. Not often, at least; because, dear Paul, for instance, one might go all over the world without meeting another innocent soul like yours. I wish I was as good as you; I do indeed. But let me tell you, that though you think me worse than other women, we are alike, most of us. You will never, never meet a woman who will love you as unselfishly as you love her."

"Don't talk nonsense, Celia!" he said, rather sternly. "And—you know I shall never care for anybody again."

She answered with a dismal little laugh: "Then don't you think you might as well forgive me?"

The only answer he made to this was to turn round, take her in his arms, and kiss her—a long, last kiss. He felt sure it was that, though she, joyful and astonished, could only think of her triumph. Yes, he would marry her now; all would be forgotten; and she would take care never to lose the love that she had kept with so much difficulty.

"What stupid we were!" she whispered. "Dear, I am so tired of Paris. Let us go back with you to England to-morrow."

Paul had flushed crimson.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I ought not—". And then, as she stood there with her hands on his arm, he went on in a quick, low voice: "No, you must stay here for the present. I must go back; there is so much to do. But I will write

in a few days to Mrs. Percival, and she will show you the letter. Then you shall decide. If you choose, in spite of everything, that our marriage shall go on, it shall. I tell you, I think it had better not, and if you agree with me, no one shall ever blame you. Good-night, and good-bye."

"But, Paul, what do you mean?"

"I can't explain—I would rather not talk any more now," he said from the door. "Yes, there was one thing I wanted to tell you. The Colonel said, not long before his death, you know, that he would like you to have Di."

"Di!" Celia repeated, staring at him.

"Yes, Di; his Clumber spaniel, the one that was always with him."

"Oh! good gracious! How very sweet of him! But I have got one already."

Mrs. Percival's natural curiosity was not, and never would be, fully satisfied; but her mind was a good deal relieved when Celia came into her room, flushed and smiling, the outer door having been shut on Paul.

"Is it all right? What was the matter?" Mrs. Percival asked anxiously. "Come and sit down by the fire, Celia; you must be very cold."

She was herself sitting comfortably with a screen in her hand, warming her feet, and a bright little fire was blazing up the chimney. She looked very soft, and snug, and pleasant; she was a most agreeable sight, even now, when her handsome brown eyes were heavy with the tears she had given to her old lover.

Celia came and leaned over the fire, stretching out her hands to it.

"I suppose it is all right," she said. "My young man is the very oddest young man—he takes the queerest fancies into his head. He loves mystery, which I hate. I wonder if there is any madness in the family."

"No, certainly not!" cried Mrs. Percival, indignantly. "But can't you tell me—what is it that Paul has got into his head?"

"No, I can't tell you exactly, Aunt Flo," said Celia. "I think I have driven it out again. He rather thinks I am not good enough for him."

"That I can't believe," said Mrs. Percival. "Paul worships and adores you. He has a much higher idea of you than—you deserve, my dear."

"Well, I don't know," said Celia, gazing into the fire. "If he has, it is very nice

of him. But if you understand—one would rather be a little less adored, and a little more trusted. The poor dear thing is desperately morbid—perhaps it is no wonder."

"Of course he is unhappy; this is a trying time for him," said Mrs. Percival. "Well—it is true, Celia—I have thought him a little morbid sometimes. I have told him that he ought to trust you more, that he is too sensitive for his own happiness. You see, you are rather a difficult kind of girl for a young fellow like Paul to understand. In fact," she went on, sighing, "I don't think you are really suited to each other, and I have sometimes been afraid that I ought not to have encouraged it. You see, Celia, you don't care for him quite enough, and when he is a little less blinded by his admiration for you—I don't know—there may be unhappiness—jealousy, perhaps. However——"

"Of whom could Paul be jealous?" said Celia sharply.

"Oh, I don't know," said Mrs. Percival more lightly. "Of Monsieur de Montmirail, for instance, who admires you so much."

They both laughed. Neither of them had any wish to go deeper into the subject.

"Dear M. de Montmirail!" said Celia. "Now if I were a French girl, with heaps of money—what fun it would be to restore that jolly old Château that his little girl was telling me about!"

"They certainly are charming people," said Mrs. Percival.

"Charming! I never saw such people. They make you so perfectly happy and contented with yourself. Sweet creatures! they are never serious and disagreeable. I love them. I wonder if Monsieur le Marquis will ever marry again?"

"Madame de Ferrand told me something about that," said Mrs. Percival. "She said he had thought of it; but gave it up again because the idea made his little daughter so unhappy."

"Selfish little goose! Why, it would be a very good thing for her," said Celia.

She had settled herself on a low stool in front of the fire, which was inconsiderately burning her face. Mrs. Percival watched her from behind her screen. She was not quite easy in her mind, and felt that she would be glad when the wedding was safely over, and her responsibility at an end. She felt sure that, in spite of Celia's light talk, the thoughts that occupied her were rather serious too. Sitting there in

the firelight, the girl's face was more thoughtful and anxious than her aunt had ever seen it before. Not angry, not unreasonable, as she had been when Paul went away to the Colonel. This was something deeper than that. It was no use asking questions, for Celia would not answer them; but Mrs. Percival felt more and more sure that there was something behind, something she was not intended to know. Well—and she herself knew something that Celia did not know, at least she supposed not; and she did not exactly feel any wish to tell her.

"Did Paul tell you if the Colonel had left him anything?" she asked presently, in a low voice.

"No; but most likely he has—everything, I should think," said Celia. "Unless he has left it to you, Aunt Flo."

"Oh, no; not to me."

"To Paul, no doubt. But they don't read people's wills, do they, till after the funeral. By-the-bye, he has left me something."

"What?" said Mrs. Percival. Her heart gave a sudden jump, and she looked hard at Celia, who answered indifferently enough.

"Oh, well, Paul says I am to have that old dog he was so fond of;" and Mrs. Percival said nothing.

After some time she sighed, and laid down her screen. "I must have a talk with Paul," she said. "I want to know a great many things."

"Not to-night; he's tired to death," said Celia.

"To-morrow morning, then. Tell me, Celia, did you really part friends?"

"Oh, the best of friends. Good-night, Aunt Flo."

When Mrs. Percival sent to Paul in the morning, he had already started for England. She was at first doubtful whether she and Celia had not better follow him; but Celia objected to this so decidedly, that she resigned herself, and waited.

Colonel Ward was laid under the snow in the high churchyard of Holm, where the starlings cried over his head, and the old bells rang in the wooden steeple. All round were the glory and shadow of the hills, and nearer, lower down, the solemn depth of the pine-wood. He was followed to his grave by a few old friends and acquaintances; Paul Romaine, the Doctor, Mr. Cole, Mr. Bailey the agent, one or two old brother officers and neighbours

who honoured him, though they did not know him very well. The snow was too deep for Canon Percival to come from Woolborough; but he wrote Paul a very generous and sympathising letter. The service was read by the Vicar of Holm, a good, rather puzzled young man, to whom Colonel Ward, in his solitary life, had always been a subject of some anxiety. Di came with Paul, and laid herself down by the grave; afterwards she would not leave it, till Paul actually carried her away.

Dr. Graves, who had been both hurt and cynically amused by Paul's hurried journey to Paris the day after his old friend's death, now found that the young man must be restored to his old place in his esteem. Nothing could be better, more business-like, more proper in every way, according to the Doctor's ideas, than young Romaine's behaviour before, at, and after the funeral. He was quite calm, and quite clear-headed. Mr. Cole, the lawyer, found him a most satisfactory executor; his only fault, perhaps, was an absolute absence of any show of feeling; he took it rather too much as a matter of course that Colonel Ward's unexpectedly large fortune should be almost all divided between himself and the girl he was going to marry. The only thing which seemed to give him a faint touch of pleasure was the Colonel's wish that Mrs. Percival should have his old china and other ornaments; also his diamonds, "except those now in her hands, of which she already knows the destination." Paul did not know what this meant; but in the dark, sad evening of that day, in the study at his own old house, from which he had turned out the workmen for the present, he sat down and wrote a formal business letter to Mrs. Percival, telling her, and begging her to tell Celia, all the particulars of the Colonel's will.

When he had finished that letter he wrote a few lines to Celia, and told her she would now see how entirely the future was in her own hands. "If it is to be good-bye," he said, "I think I shall go abroad at once, for a long time; in the other case, you will do as you please. Do not keep me very long in suspense."

Who can say what he wished in his heart? The hardest thing in the whole world is to remember the unworthiness of our dearest.

Anyhow, here ends the story of Paul Romaine's first love.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XXII. ENOCH ARDEN.

"DEAR BERESFORD,—My poor father died in an apoplectic fit, which was not what the doctor expected. He was looking over some old papers, bills and things, when it happened, and died before Meldon came. He had sent for Meldon the night before. The funeral will be on Wednesday—quite private—and I shall have to stay here for a week or two to see to things before I can return to Hammersley. Many thanks for the letter, which I shall not use, if I can help it. Meldon was sent for to make some changes in the will, but he doesn't know what, or won't say. He's very close. I think I shall keep him on and all the rest—at least, for the present.

"My poor father looks very like himself. It was so terribly sudden that I hardly realise it yet, though every one is talking of it, and people are full of sympathy; and tenants coming bothering me about farms as if I could settle anything at such a time. I see I shall have a good deal to look into and arrange before I return to you, and the shock has been so sudden besides. I have written to May by this post. If you have said anything to her about your letter, tell her that I shall not make use of it.

"Yours very truly,
"AUGUSTUS GOWER."

The letter to May was, with the exception of some allusions to the shock and pain of his bereavement scattered here and there through it, a love-letter, pure and simple, of a singularly boyish and uninteresting kind.

"Gower says he has written to you,"

Fred said, when he had got May to himself after breakfast.

"Yes; he seems in great trouble. It was terrible not to have a word of forgiveness or explanation—terrible!"

"It must have been a great relief to him, though, to find that his letter had nothing whatever to do with it."

"Does he say so?"

"He says that he died in a fit of apoplexy while looking over old accounts. He was a great screw, you know."

"He doesn't want us to think it had anything to do with it, he is so generous."

"He's a good fellow; he says he will make no use of the confession I sent him."

"Confession?"

"Yes; I couldn't let him take the blame of this, after what you said. If you thought it had anything to do with his death, others would think it; so I wrote a full confession for him to use as he liked."

"Oh, Fred; I'm so glad! It was just like you; I'm so glad!"

"It was the only thing to do," Fred rejoined with a lofty self-complacency which was not, by any means, all assumed.

"And he refuses to use it. There never was any one so generous!"

Even Fred was wise enough to know that such pronounced praise did not prove love. In truth, it proved May's guilty consciousness of inability to love or to make Gower any return for his generosity.

She could no more bear to read his letter a second time than a ruined man can bear to look again through the accounts of his hopeless liabilities. She flung it into the fire the moment she could do so unseen, and then hurried out to walk down some of her wretchedness in the woods, where alone she could be secure of solitude.

Now these woods were sacred to Hugh's memory. There was no nook or corner in them, and hardly a tree which had not some association with him, pleasant and plaintive as sad music; and it was not possible to go through them at any time, whatever her prepossession, without yearning remembrance of him.

This idea of his life would sweetly creep
Into her study of imagination.

But to-day other associations—the associations of love, of the source and force of which she was unconscious—brought back Hugh's memory more persistently and vividly than ever before. She drank deep draughts of it to the drowning of all thoughts of her present wretchedness, until, in her unnerved state, Hugh seemed somehow beside her.

As she sat down beneath a giant oak which he had often in old days helped her to climb, and which was scarred on each big limb with her initials cut deeply and deftly long ago with his great clasp knife, she felt growing upon her in the green gloom and in the eerie stillness an extraordinarily vivid sense of his nearness. It grew and grew till her lips parted, her breath came quicker, her eyes widened, and she had that strange and thrilling impression, which one sometimes has at night when unnerved and alone, of a being behind you. You fear to turn your head lest you should realise your dread; but May feared to turn hers lest she should lose the happy illusion. When, however, she was forced at last by an irresistible fascination to turn her head, she saw Hugh advancing swiftly towards her through a dim and narrow aisle of the wood. So real and intense had been the impression of his presence, that the actual sight of him seemed but the continuation of her day-dream. She watched him approach without a start, or exclamation, or stir, or quiver of an eyelid till her fixed look of fascination made him cry when within a pace or two:

"It's me, May; not my ghost, I assure you."

"Hugh!" she cried.

"You thought I was dead?"

But she still looked up blankly at him as though she were waking slowly from a dream of which the voice and words of one who wakes you come to be part.

"I've startled you," he said with a sudden change to anxiety in his tone.

"It is Hugh!" she cried, springing up with sudden excitement and energy, and holding out to him both her hands. The

next moment, however, she reseated herself with her back against the tree, dizzy, faint, and white to the lips.

"You are ill!" he cried, kneeling by her side and taking out his travelling flask.

She waved it away with a hand which he caught and held.

"I — was — startled," she gasped presently.

"I ought to have written; but I thought I should have been here as soon as my letter. I've not been home yet," he said hurriedly, holding still her hand and bending over her anxiously. "You thought me a ghost?" he added, as May remained silent, leaning back with closed eyes against the tree.

She opened her eyes and looked up intently at him for a little before she said:

"You've been very ill."

"No; I've been in jail—rather a bad jail—which pulled me down a bit. I was taken as a prisoner of war by the Peruvians, though I had no more to do with the business than you; and I couldn't get free till the peace, for all my British protestations. You all thought me dead, I suppose?"

May looked all round her, and then up into his face again to reassure herself it was no dream.

"I half thought it was a dream," she said with such an expression of childlike wonder in her smile as made him almost think for a moment it was the old May that sat there beside him as of old. "I was thinking of you, till the strangest, strongest feeling that you were behind me made me look round, and—there you were! I was so sure of your being there that I was not startled at all at first—or glad even! Oh, Hugh! I cannot tell you—I cannot tell you how glad I am!" she cried, and then broke down with a sob and a shower of happy tears.

He stooped and kissed her, and fondled tenderly the little hand he held, but was himself too much moved to speak.

"Did you see father?" she asked presently, hoping by this indifferent question to regain command of herself.

"No! there was no one in, but I found dear old Con in the garden, who sent me after you here. It was almost worth while being away so long to get Con's welcome. He blessed me again and again, with the tears running down his cheeks, as if I had done him some great kindness in coming back. By the way, he frightened me about you; he said he feared you were in some trouble."

"I!"

"Yes; and some trouble which I might get you out of, too—I thought it was in Heaven you were, and you've dropped from there, anyhow, between Miss May and harm," he said; but he wouldn't explain what he meant."

May withdrew her hand from his, and turned away her face to hide from him its scarlet. Then, rising suddenly, she said:

"Father will long so to see you; your own father could not have been more anxious and wretched about you; and mother——"

"May, tell me," Hugh cried, interrupting her, and speaking with breathless eagerness, "what is it? What is this trouble? Are you—are you—am I too late?"

Here was a precipitous plunge five minutes after his first meeting with May as a woman! But in all these years this hope had grown to be so much a part of his life—of himself—that it burst naturally from his lips in his agitation.

All the blood in May's body seemed to surge suddenly into her face, and as suddenly to retire, leaving her so faint that she was fain to reseat herself.

"May, forgive me. I hardly know what I am saying; but I've so long thought of this, lived for this—only this could have kept me alive in that frightful prison—that I cannot help expressing the fear that has tortured me day and night for months and months. If you knew how many thousand times I have asked myself, 'Shall I have a chance? Will she even be free?' you would understand, you would forgive me. You do, dear?"

Was there ever in the world such a proposal made ten minutes after meeting the girl for the first time since her childhood? Yet more singular than the proposal, perhaps, was May's not thinking it singular.

In the pure and charming love dreams of childhood—which are to the passionate love dreams of youth as moonshine is to sunshine, light without heat, a mere lambent reflection of the unrisen, scorching splendour to come—in these soft, moonlight dreams Hugh had been May's ideal knight, who would one day return to lay all at her feet. And afterwards, when she and all had thought him dead, he remained her ideal standard with whom she compared every one, to the immeasurable disadvantage of all her admirers.

Thus May's mind had become almost as

much familiarised with the idea of Hugh as a suitor, as Hugh's mind had become with the idea of May as the hope and happiness of his life. She knew that Hugh had intended, and had announced his intention, of one day coming home to win her; and if he lived—she knew also—he would hold to his resolve.

Hugh's headlong proposal, therefore, did not startle May, however much it embarrassed, humbled, and tortured her. What her loveless engagement to Gower really was—odious, degrading, insupportable—was disclosed to her in all its naked hideousness. A few minutes since, if she knew that she had no love for Gower, at least she was unconscious of love for another. But now she knew that she loved Hugh with her whole heart and soul. She had loved him all her life—so loved him that, had she known he still lived, nothing and no one could have persuaded her, or terrified her into an engagement with Gower. For her engagement was now in her eyes, a kind of horrible apostasy.

Such thoughts rushed in a whirl through her mind, while Hugh was pouring out in a headlong torrent the pent up love of his life. For, as she still remained silent, Hugh, misconstruing her silence, proceeded to apologise for his abrupt and mad proposal by an ardent and incoherent history of his love for her. He had loved her from childhood; had declared to her father, at his last visit, his love for her, and his resolve to return and try to win her; and in all the intervening years this hope had sustained and cheered him, and had been the only thing he had cared to live for during his terrible imprisonment. When, then, this suspicion of what Con meant had suddenly occurred to him, he could not contain himself. This Hugh delivered himself of as his apology with a wild and fervid incoherence.

"Hugh," cried May, interrupting him impulsively before he had finished, "Hugh, I ought not to have listened to you. I am engaged."

Here there fell a blank silence, filled for both with despair.

"I ought not to have listened to you, but—but I could not help it," May cried, childishly and desperately, after a little.

"You're not offended?" Hugh answered eagerly, winning from her words and tone a faint, vague hope.

"Offended! Oh, Hugh, if I had only known——" Here she paused in utter disgust with herself. Was this fair to Mr.

Gower? And Hugh! What could he think of this suggestion that her heart was at the command of the first that asked for it?

"May, it was not your own doing!" cried Hugh, with a sudden conviction that this engagement was of Mrs. Beresford's making.

"I didn't mean that at all," May replied helplessly. "But I'm so sorry to pain you! I cannot tell you how sorry I am."

"You can hardly accuse yourself of giving me encouragement," Hugh answered with a short laugh, not pleasant to hear. He had now no doubt that May's distress meant merely pity for him, and her pity was as gall in the wound. Ashamed the next moment of his petulance, he added: "There was hardly time for it, was there? It is I who should feel sorry and ashamed to have given you pain without any kind of reason or provocation. But you will forgive me for old sake's sake, May!"

She could not for tears make answer for some moments, and then she struggled to say:

"I am not changed, and can never change to you, Hugh—never! You've not been out of my thoughts, I think, for a single day since you left us. And when we heard—when we heard—" Here, at the thought at once of his supposed death, of his return to life and to her, she again broke down. "Oh, Hugh!" she sobbed; "I can hardly believe it yet. It is wonderful! I was thinking of you, till I was quite certain you were beside me; and there you were! I never in all my life felt so happy as at that moment. And now I never felt more miserable."

"I have been such a brute and idiot. If I had only waited an hour, I should have heard of this, and held my tongue."

"No, no; I'm glad you spoke. I mean—I don't know what I mean. But do not speak of it again, Hugh; I cannot bear it."

Hugh naturally set down this shrinking from all reference to the subject to her sisterly affection for him and to her more than womanly pitifulness. Accordingly he resolved never to torment her by troubling her himself, or by allowing others to trouble her about it. He would, of course, confide to the Vicar his proposal and rejection, but he would exact from him at the same time a promise never to speak of them to May. He would make the shortest possible stay at the Vicarage, or, indeed, in

England, which he would quit this time for ever.

While Hugh was mentally making these resolutions of loyal compliance with May's adjuration, "never to speak of it again," May, in her heart, and with all her heart, was thirsting to hear of it again with the thirst of the desert. With a still deeper thirst she longed to hint to Hugh her love for him, although she yet felt it to be the basest treachery to Gower. When they talked of old times, she took care to let him know how she had treasured up his most insignificant words and acts as the Scriptures of her memory; how she came, when she could, alone into these woods, to live over again their old days together there; and how almost every nook and corner of them was historic to her through some association with him.

If Hugh had not been the least of a coxcomb of any man in the world, he would have perceived that she was in love with him all her life. As it was, however, he perceived only that she had been in love with him in her childhood, in the unconscious and whole-hearted manner of that trustful age, and that this love would have developed into all he sought for, if only he had returned in time, or even, perhaps, if he had been known by her to be alive. This miserable "might have been" rather intensified than lightened his wretchedness, through intensifying his love and his disappointment. He felt all the despair and anguish of an Enoch Arden, without the sustaining sense of self-sacrifice. If he had spared May the pain of the foolish and frantic avowal of his love, he would have found in such self-suppression some fortitude to support him in this total wreck of his hope and happiness. But he had neither this sense of heroism, nor this comfort of having left May's life untroubled, to sustain him. For the first time, in a life full of dangers and desperate straits, he was utterly cast down.

"You've not told me who he is," he said at last, with a desperate effort, in order to remind himself how little these maddening reminiscences of May's meant to him now.

"He's a Mr. Gower, a college friend of Fred's," May answered, turning hot and cold as quickly as the scarlet flushed and faded in her cheeks.

"Is he staying with you now?" asked Hugh, turning the barbed spear-head in his wound with the strange fascination

the tortured sometimes feel to intensify of themselves their sufferings.

"No; his father died very suddenly while he was here."

"Is it of long standing?"

"No; only the other day."

The silence which followed was filled to the brim with torture to both.

"Well," Hugh cried at last, springing up, for they had been seated for some minutes in an old haunt of theirs. "I have left myself little time to see your father and mother."

May was too much stupefied to answer for a little. She remained still seated, looking up at him with wide eyes. Was he going at once—that day; and going for ever? When he did go, it would be for ever—of this she was certain—and his words could mean only that he was going that day.

"Hugh, you cannot mean that you are going to-day?" she was able to say presently.

"It will be better."

"No; you cannot; you cannot, Hugh!" she cried, rising, seizing his hand in both of hers, and looking up at him piteously with imploring eyes and quivering lips. An absolutely irresistible impulse made him clasp her suddenly in his arms and kiss her passionately.

"You see now that I must go," he said almost with a sob as he released her.

Hereon May nearly lost all control over herself.

"Hugh, I cannot——" "Give you up," she had almost said; but, after a moment's hesitation, she replaced it by—"let you go—not yet."

Hugh smoothed back the hair from her forehead with both hands—which she felt shake as in palsy—while all the love of all these years seemed to shine down from his eyes, to be reflected from hers; but otherwise he did not speak.

"You will not go?" she faltered, feeling herself grow faint and dizzy under the blaze of his eyes and all the passionate love and worship it expressed.

"I don't know that I can," he answered with a world of meaning in the words and in the sigh of despair with which he uttered them.

It is almost incredible that he could look into her eyes or hear the tone and tremor of her voice without discerning her love; but, having understood her to say that her engagement to Gower was of her own spontaneous making, he could not doubt her love for his rival.

May he knew well was the last person in the world to give her hand without her heart, or to give her heart one week to one man, and the next to another. Wherefore, Hugh, being naturally diffident, and doubly diffident in this case through his extravagant worship of May, found no hope for himself in the love which looked through her yearning eyes or trembled in her faltering voice. It was only a sister's love!

On the other hand, when May had come somewhat to herself and had realised how nearly she had betrayed herself, and how dangerous was the further prolongation of their talk, she suddenly remembered how impatient her father would be to see Hugh. He had probably followed him into the woods only to lose him and to return home disappointed. For May had taken Hugh zigzag through all their favourite haunts of old, both in and out of the woods, not without quoting to him what she had often and often repeated of him and of these haunts to herself:

I climb the hill; from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass or whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheep-walk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw,
That hears the latest linnet trill;
Nor quarry trenched along the hill,
And haunted by the wrangling daw.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A DANIEL COME TO JUDGEMENT.

BEFORE they reached the Vicarage they encountered the Vicar, who had, as May supposed, been for some time in search of them.

"My boy," he said to Hugh with an emotion he could hardly control, as he grasped and held his hand without shaking it. "My boy! I thought I should never see you again in this world."

"I couldn't write, sir; not in time. I came here first," was all Hugh was able to say. The Vicar read what had passed between them as plainly in their faces as though Hugh had already confided it to him. He was miserably sorry for Hugh, and, for the first time in his life, almost angry with May. What on earth could she have seen in this Gower—a mere boy without one single sensible idea in his

head? And no one was more keenly conscious of his deadly dullness than herself only a week or so since. How she had groaned under it and laughed over it! Her acceptance of Gower was to herself and to her father, as intelligible and defensible to-day as a week since; but it did not seem so. Whatever was then to be said for it was to be said for it still; but Hugh's appearance dimmed it to darkness as sunrise dims a taper.

And not Gower only was so dimmed by Hugh's appearance, but also, as we say, whatever reasons or excuses seemed plausible but yesterday in extenuation of May's engagement to him, were dimmed to invisibility. Wherefore her father was disappointed almost to impatience and anger with May because of an engagement which he had regarded calmly enough when it was entered on. This May was not slow to perceive, in part, perhaps, because she was prepared for it, and in part because she could read her father's face as a book. She saw at once from his manner to Hugh that her father had divined his proposal and rejection, and from his manner to herself that he was disappointed in her; and it needed only her father's disapproval, and—as she put it bitterly to herself—his contempt, to fill to overflowing her wretchedness.

It was, therefore, a miserable walk to the Vicarage—the more miserable as being Hugh's welcome back to life. The Vicar questioned him about his disappearance, and Hugh answered to the questions absently and perfunctorily, his mind plainly being recalled with difficulty to each as it was put. May was absolutely silent, and the moment she reached the Vicarage she hurried up to her room to abandon herself utterly to her despair. Hugh turned at once into the study instead of asking to see Mrs. Beresford, and the Vicar followed him, with no doubt at all as to the character of the confidence he was about to hear.

"Dear old place! I've had many a headache here," Hugh said, as he stood in the middle of the room looking at the backs of those abominable books. "How I wish I was back again in it, and in those dear old days! Ah, well, they're gone, and what made them so happy is gone with them. You know what that was, sir, and how it's gone," he said, facing the Vicar. "I told you I would come back to try my fortune, and I have, and—and—It was the hope of all my life, sir," he said

with a sudden break in his voice, turning sharply away to look out of the window.

The Vicar put his hand upon his shoulder and let it rest there, but made no other reply.

"I could not help speaking, sir," Hugh said after a painful pause, keeping still his face averted. "I could not help speaking, though I suspected from something Con said that I was too late. I ought to have waited, and made sure about it, and spared her a great trouble; for it's a great trouble to her, sir. Heaven bless her!"

"It could not be anything else, Hugh, to her or to me."

"I couldn't help it," Hugh reiterated more to himself than to the Vicar. "It was what I always lived for, and the only thing I cared to live for lately. I declare, sir, but for it I should have longed to die and be done with it in that infernal dungeon; and I should have died, too, I believe. I wish I—well, it's no good blubbing or blustering about it; it can't be helped."

"If we had only known; if you had only come a month ago. She always worshipped you," the Vicar cried incoherently in his agitation.

"Only a month ago?"

"She has not known him longer."

Hugh's first thought was of exceeding bitterness. May to engage herself to a man she had known but a month! Was this the May of his lifelong worship? But something of bitterness in the Vicar's tone rallied his chivalrous loyalty to her side. If her father resented this hasty engagement, and showed her that he resented it, she would be yet more miserable about it.

"After all, a month under one roof means a good deal, sir; she would know more of him in that way than most girls know of the men they marry."

The Vicar could not say that he thought that this more intimate knowledge of Gower was precisely what made the engagement indefensible.

As he remained silent Hugh said presently:

"I hope he's worthy of her, sir; as worthy of her at least as a man can be."

"He seems a good fellow," answered the Vicar—grudging praise which was uttered in so half-hearted a tone as left Hugh in no doubt of his disapproval of the engagement. He felt utterly ashamed of his momentary gratification at this disapproval, which meant only unhappiness to May.

"She's not the kind of a girl to make a

mistake; I mean, to accept a man merely for his looks or manners."

"I don't think they had much to do with it," answered the Vicar, with a suspicion of sarcasm in his tone.

"What does Mrs. Beresford think of it?"

"She approves of it," replied the Vicar, curtly, adding, after a moment's pause, "he's a very good match from a worldly point of view."

"I haven't seen her yet," cried Hugh, with sudden compunction; and the unsatisfactory interview was at an end.

Meanwhile, May, in her own room, abandoned herself to utter despair. She flung herself upon the bed, looking into what seemed to her dead, black, eternal darkness. She loved Hugh; with her whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength she loved him, and he was for ever lost to her. For a long time this one thought swallowed up all others in total eclipse; but, at last, there showed behind it her engagement to Gower. How odious it now appeared to her. How monstrous; how wicked! Was it right—would or could anything make it right to marry a man for whom she cared nothing, while loving another as she loved Hugh? Was this not wrong all round, and most of all wrong to Mr. Gower himself? Thus conscience, which but now pleaded against her, seemed suddenly to turn to take her side—like Portia, an unlooked for and thrice welcome ally and advocate.

In the Buddhist "Tri-Pitakas" occurs this, the finest definition of religion we have ever met. "What is religion? It is the perfect agreement of the will with the conscience." But the converse of this, "the perfect agreement of the conscience with the will"—not the same thing exactly—is the ordinary form religion takes with us. Let the will but get hold of the tiller, and it will so tack that the wind of conscience, let it blow whithersoever it listeth, will waft it indirectly towards its goal.

In May's case, anyway, it was amazing with what sudden force it struck her that her engagement to Gower was as wrong as it was odious to her. It broke upon her like the light of a sudden revelation, and roused her from her stupor to a state of feverish excitement. She must forthwith see Fred, and so put this irresistible case to him that he would help her to break her engagement. In fact, her state of feeling at this moment was simply a violent reaction from her blank and black despair

of a moment before. Springing from the bed she hurried from the room in a breathless search for Fred, whom she found smoking in his bedroom.

"Fred! Hugh has come back!"

"So I hear," Fred replied coolly, puffing a column of smoke in rings to the ceiling.

"Haven't you seen him? He's downstairs."

"Oh, I shall see him soon enough, I dare say. He's not going back to China or Peru to-night, I suppose."

May's case ceased suddenly to seem to her irresistible. Indeed, she did not know now how or where to begin.

"I cannot tell you how glad I was to see him again," she said lamely enough.

"Tell him. I don't take much interest in the matter, to tell you the truth. We never hit it off together somehow."

"But it wasn't about him I came to speak to you," May said with a sudden change in her tone. As she paused here, Fred said "Yes!" inquiringly holding his pipe from his lips and looking up at her in some surprise, and even anxiety.

"It was about Mr. Gower—about our engagement. Fred, it's not right. Not right to him when I do not care for him," she said hurriedly and incoherently.

"And who's 'him'? Hugh Grey?"

"What do you mean?" she cried, flushing scarlet.

"What do you mean? You can't mean that it's not right to Gower, for he's the best judge of that himself. He knows how much or how little you care for him, and he gave up all his prospects for it. But now that his father's dead, and he has no hold on us, you want to break your bargain! I declare I never heard anything meaner in all my life. It is mean, May; you know it is; and no one in the world would think it meaner than yourself if you hadn't got this new idea into your head."

"What new idea?"

"Hugh Grey, then, if you want plain speaking. Do you mean to tell me that if Hugh Grey hadn't turned up you would have thought of throwing Gower over in this way? And what will Gower think of it? What would any one think of it? What would you think of it yourself if it were some one else who jilted a man to whom she owed so much the moment she got out of his power?"

"That had nothing at all to do with it!" May cried hotly, and on the brink of adding, "It was not I that was in his

power," for the truth, even more than the brutality, of Fred's speech exasperated her.

"But it has to do with it," Fred retorted petulantly. "If Gower's father were alive you could not have thought of jilting him."

This was really too much even for May, and even from Fred.

"Fred, you ought to be the last to say that."

"Because it was I let you in for it? If that's what you mean it's a pity you didn't think in this way of it in time, and didn't let me get out of it my own way."

As May remained silent, Fred thought it well to change his tack.

"I'm an ill-conditioned beast, I know, May; but you've no idea how I've been worried by all sorts of things; and then this comes! I owe Gower so much, and he's been so generous—more than generous about this—that the idea of your throwing him over now is enough to drive me wild—now isn't it? What can he think of us? What explanation can you give? You can't say that you've seen some one you liked better since he left us a week since; and what else is there to say? All that about not caring for him as you ought you said already; but it didn't prevent him giving up everything for your sake, and it didn't prevent you accepting him either. What has occurred since to change you, except Hugh Grey's turning up to-day? And you could hardly give him this as an explanation. I declare, May, if you throw him over like this after all he has done for us, I can never dare to look him in the face again."

It was not a flattering glass Fred held up to her, presenting the obverse face of the conduct she had thought a few minutes since so conscientious and becoming; but May was too candid not to acknowledge to herself the substantial truth of the reflection. If anything, she was given to almost morbid introspection and self-accusation, and Fred's rough speaking "had turned her eyes into her very soul," and showed her in what a fool's paradise of conscience she had been living for the last few minutes.

No girl in the world was more shudderingly sensitive to the coarse disgrace expressed by such phrases as "jilting," "throwing over." And did they not express plainly, yet precisely, what she had but now meditated doing as a conscientious

duty? How could she have so sophisticated her conscience as to make it seem to dictate the precise opposite of her real duty? She had now by another reaction come to see with still clearer certainty that the precise opposite was her real duty. Had it not the note, too, whereby religious girls, like May, recognise duty—the note of unpleasantness?

Altogether May quitted Fred's room—which she left without another word to him—exceedingly angry both with herself for the truth of his charges, and with him for his plain speaking. Her anger with him for his plain speaking, again, was fiercer from the hidden fire beneath it of her resentment of his antipathy to Hugh. She could more easily have forgiven his calling her "a jilt," than his contemptuous indifference about Hugh. Plainly he was not in the least interested in Hugh's return to life, if, indeed, he did not even resent it. It ought to surprise no one that this made more against Fred, and contributed more to May's disenchantment with him, than either his forgery or the selfishness and ingratitude he showed about it.

It seemed to need only this last drop of her estrangement from Fred to make May's cup of misery overflow. She could look now to no one for sympathy, since even her father despised her, while her mother and Fred were ranged on the other side. On the other side, too, her conscience was now ranged irrevocably. She had not the least doubt that her duty lay on the side of keeping to her engagement to Gower; for Fred's way of looking at the matter seemed more just to her the more she considered it. Her womanly way of considering it, no doubt, helped her to a more quick and positive decision about it. She asked herself, not only what would Fred and Mr. Gower think of her sudden change of mind, but what would her father think of it, and what would even Hugh himself? To neither of them was she free to explain the meaning and motive of her engagement to Gower; and, without such an explanation, the breaking off of this engagement a week after it had been entered upon, would have seemed to them as silly as it was dishonourable. Possibly even Hugh would not think so fickle and facile a heart worth accepting at second hand. Thus May, after the quenching of this sudden flash of hope, was plunged into even deeper darkness of despair than before.

FRENCH LITERARY "ANA."

COLLECTIONS of anecdotes, especially those relating to literary and dramatic celebrities, have always been popular in France; and, whether genuine or apocryphal—for, as long as the reader is amused, he is not apt to be particular about trifles—command a ready and extensive sale. Hardly a single individual of any eminence has escaped being the hero of a duodecimo volume published as speedily as possible after his death, and containing whatever specimens of his "table-talk" the compiler may have succeeded in collecting, together with others of more than doubtful origin. Books of this kind are not only pleasant reading, but, when once the wheat is separated from the chaff, have a certain value as supplying characteristic traits and opinions of remarkable persons which are not to be met with elsewhere. Many of these are too hackneyed to admit of reproduction; the following, however, selected from strictly reliable sources, are less generally known, and for the most part appear for the first time in a translated form.

Cardinal Richelieu, who prided himself far more on having written the tragedy of "Mirame," than on his ecclesiastical dignity, and whose especial delight was to be regarded as an enlightened patron of men of letters, remarked one day to Bautru that he had not seen Guez de Balzac for some weeks, and asked if he were ill. "He has a bad cold, your eminence," replied the cynical humorist; "and, considering that he only talks about himself, and takes off his hat as a mark of respect every time he speaks, he is not likely to get rid of it in a hurry."

Some one asked Piron what was the difference between a woman and a looking-glass? "A very material one," was his answer. "A woman speaks without reflecting, whereas a looking-glass reflects without speaking."

Voltaire, annoyed at the plagiarisms of certain Academicians, complained of them to Sedaine. "It is a pity," he said, "that other people are not like you, for you take nothing from any one." "I should be richer if I did," modestly replied Sedaine.

When Jean Baptiste Rousseau had finished his "Ode to Posterity," he showed it to Voltaire. "I very much doubt," said the author of "La Henriade," "if the letter will ever reach its address."

An indifferent poet, speaking of his own verses, remarked to Voltaire that they cost him little trouble. "They cost you exactly what they are worth," was the reply.

"If we were to believe all that those accused of crime have to say in their defence," observed a magistrate to the Abbé Desfontaines (the translator of "Gulliver"), "not one of them would be guilty." "That may be," replied the Abbé, "but if, on the other hand, you were to believe all that their accusers say, it is certain that among those brought before you not one would escape scot-free."

Amyot was asked why he did not write a history of the Kings of France. "I have too much respect for those I serve," he answered, "to attempt to be their biographer."

The celebrated punster, the Marquis de Bièvre, had a cook, who half ruined him by her unlucky habit of breaking every dish she laid hold of. "I call her," he said, "Inez de Casse-trop" (Castro).

An acquaintance of his, who had often served as the butt of his wit, revenged himself on his persecutor in the following way: while driving in a close carriage on the Boulevard, during a heavy shower of rain, he beheld the Marquis making signals to him from the footway. Telling the driver to stop, he inquired what was the matter. "Matter!" exclaimed de Bièvre. "Let me in; I am wet through!" "Well now," coolly answered his friend, "you must excuse me, but I really do not see the point of the joke. Drive on, coachman."

Among the various purchases made by Madame Dubarry, after her installation in the Pavillon of Louveciennes, not the least expensive item was a valuable collection of richly-bound books. This being told to Rivarol, he quietly remarked that she hardly required so many to teach her how to read.

The same humorist, while supping with a party of citizens at Hamburg, did his best to amuse them by a brilliant display of his well-known epigrammatic wit, but soon discovered that, although they all listened to him attentively, they had the greatest difficulty in catching the meaning of what he said. "Just look at these Germans," he whispered to a Frenchman who sat near him; "it takes a dozen of them to understand a joke!"

At the first performance of Beaumarchais' drama, "The Two Friends," a

wag suggested the following addition to the title: "By a man who has none."

Someone asked Madame d'Argenson, the wife of Louis the Fifteenth's Minister, which of the two brothers, Pâris du Martel, or Pâris du Verney, she liked best. "When I am talking to one of them," she replied, "I prefer the other."

The witty actress, Mademoiselle Quinault, speaking of a lady who, whenever she happened to say anything clever, repeated it to everyone she met, remarked: "That woman never gets hold of a good thing without spoiling it."

When Fouché, the all-powerful minister of police, heard that the dramatist, Andrieux, was in poor circumstances, he offered him the post of censor, which the good-natured author of "Le Manteau" refused, saying that "it might be his destiny to be hung, but he would never consent to officiate as hangman."

A critic found fault with Esménard for borrowing some indifferent verses from Corneille. "They were not worth stealing," said Martainville, the editor of the *Drapeau Blanc*; "Esménard is like an inexperienced thief who picks a rich man's pocket, and, leaving the gold, only takes the copper."

The witty sayings of Sophie Arnould are legion, and have furnished matter for more than one volume of "ana." Many of those attributed to her are of doubtful authenticity; the following, however, are generally allowed to be genuine.

The Marquis de Letorières, immortalised in our own day by Déjazet, was considered the handsomest man of his time. Being smitten with the charms of a fair actress, whose rapacity was equal to her beauty, he presented her with his portrait, first showing it, however, to Sophie.

"You are as handsome as Cupid," said Mademoiselle Arnould, "but your Danaë would rather have the King's picture than yours!"

Sedaine happening to pay her a visit after the failure of one of his pieces, this disaster was alluded to in the course of conversation. The dramatist blamed himself for having chosen an unlucky moment for its production, and concluded by saying, figuratively, that "the pear was not ripe."

"That has not hindered it from falling," replied Sophie.

One day, while walking in the Bois de Boulogne, she met a physician of her acquaintance carrying a gun.

"Which way are you going, you and your gun?" she asked.

"To see a patient at Longchamps," he replied.

"That looks," said Sophie, "as if you were afraid of missing him."

A certain Marquis having received a sound caning, and not appearing disposed to resent the insult:

"How can he allow the matter to rest there?" asked someone.

"Bah!" said Sophie, "don't you see that he has sense enough not to care about what passes behind his back?"

A very pretty woman, but without the slightest pretension to wit, or even common sense, was once complaining of the opportunity of her numerous admirers.

"Nothing is easier," remarked Mademoiselle Arnould, "than to get rid of them altogether; you have only to speak to them."

The Abbé Terray, who was made "contrôleur-général des finances" in 1769, did not scruple to sacrifice the interests of private individuals to those of the State. This procured him many enemies, one of the most violent of whom was Sophie. On the Abbé's appearing in public in the depth of winter, carrying a magnificent muff, she exclaimed:

"What does he want with a muff? His hands are always in our pockets."

Count Louis de Narbonne, a dabbler in poetry, while walking with Talleyrand, began to recite some of his own indifferent verses. The diplomatist endured the infliction for a few minutes without betraying any sign of impatience, but presently, perceiving an individual within hearing who happened to be yawning, he quietly remarked to his companion: "Look yonder, Narbonne, you always speak too loud!"

Someone was wondering at Talleyrand's immense fortune. "There is nothing surprising in it," said the Academician Etienne; "he has sold all those who bought him."

At a soirée given in honour of Bonaparte after his Italian campaign, at which Madame de Staël was present, she criticised pretty freely the different forms of Government, Monarchical and Republican, which had succeeded one another in France. Her discourse elicited repeated marks of approbation; the hero of Lodi, however, remained silent, to her evident disappointment.

"Are you not of my opinion, general?" she inquired.

"Madame," he replied, "I think that

women ought not to meddle with politics."

"In ordinary cases," retorted the author of "Corinne," "you may be right; but in a country where women are exposed to have their heads cut off, it is very natural that they should wish to know the reason why."

Someone happening to observe that Royer-Collard had become very deaf, one of those present asked since when? "Probably," said Madame Ancelot, "since no one has thought it worth while to talk about him."

After the revolution of 1848, Lamartine received so many applications from place-hunters that, being unable to satisfy all, he selected a certain number from the list of candidates, who in due course of time were nominated to the vacant posts. One of these, however, remained unclaimed; and a fortnight later his secretary asked him if he could give him any information respecting "Citizen David, appointed French Consul at Bremen."

"David," said Lamartine, "I do not know him. Let me look at the list." And taking out his pocket-book, he discovered on one of the pages, "David" inscribed in large letters. Suddenly he remembered that a few days before his accession to power, he had written it himself to remind him of a particular passage in the Psalms, and amicably reproached his subordinate for having unconsciously transformed the King of Israel into a Republican Consul. This singular mistake was rectified as follows in the next morning's *Moniteur*: "Citizen X. is appointed Consul of France at Bremen, in lieu of Citizen David, deceased."

The Duke de Morny, one of the most prominent figures at the Court of Napoleon the Third, and a liberal patron of literature and art, was extremely popular in society, a distinction he owed to the singular fascination of his manner, and to a certain reputation for gallantry which, at least as far as the fair sex were concerned, was by no means prejudicial to him. In 1856, before his elevation to the dukedom, he was constantly in the habit of frequenting the house of a banker, whose two sisters-in-law were remarkably attractive; and, one evening, while engaged in conversation with the prettiest of the pair, he was requested by his host to join a party at "lansquenet" in the next room. Annoyed at the interruption, he begged to be excused, saying that he hated play.

"Only for a quarter of an hour," persisted the banker. "We will let you off easily; but positively we can't do without you."

"Well," replied Morny, shrugging his shoulders resignedly, "if I must, I must; but let us get it over as soon as possible," and, following his entertainer into the adjoining room, he declined to take part in the game, but offered to bet on the colour of the first card turned.

"How much do you wish to stake?" inquired the banker.

"Suppose we say ten thousand francs," carelessly suggested the Count.

At the mention of so large a sum the guests looked at each other, and hesitated to cover it; so that their host felt compelled, although somewhat unwillingly, to accept the challenge.

"Which colour do you choose?" he asked.

"Red," said M. de Morny.

The dealer turned up the seven of spades; whereupon the loser, imagining he had done all that was required of him, was on the point of retiring, when his adversary proposed "double or quits."

"As you will," assented the Count. "This time I choose black."

"You have lost again," said the banker, as the ten of hearts came up.

"Very good," coolly remarked M. de Morny. "I conclude you will now leave me in peace for the rest of the evening."

And, sauntering leisurely into the drawing-room, he resumed his conversation with the fair lady as if nothing had happened.

Another characteristic anecdote, dating from the reign of Louis Philippe, is related of him. He had then been recently elected a member of the Chamber of Deputies, and received one day an invitation to dinner from a rich financier of the period, who was fond of ostentatiously displaying his newly acquired wealth and sumptuously appointed table. He had, however, one peculiar weakness, of which those who had partaken of his hospitality were well aware, and which, somehow or other, had come to the ears of M. de Morny. A certain wine in his cellar, a Léoville of exquisite bouquet and flavour, was exclusively reserved for the Amphitryon himself, his wife, and a single guest whom he particularly wished to favour; the others being debarred from a taste of this delicious nectar.

In the course of dinner, the privileged trio having been previously supplied with

the incomparable Léoville, wines of various sorts were handed round; and when it came to the Count's turn, he was asked by the butler if he preferred Château Lafitte or Hermitage?

"Neither," he replied in a distinctly audible tone. "Give me some Léoville."

The dismayed attendant glanced at his master, who, putting a good face on the matter, directed him to hand "M. le Comte" the wine he preferred; whereupon M. de Morny, negligently emptying the precious liquid from the claret glass into a tumbler, filled the latter with water, and drank it off; then, turning towards his neighbour, continued his conversation with him as unconcernedly as if nothing had occurred to interrupt it. Whether the parvenu profited by the lesson so pointedly administered to him, and dispensed his Léoville more equitably in future, is not recorded.

At a literary dinner, one of the guests had set the company in a roar by relating a droll story of an impecunious individual who had ingeniously contrived to borrow money from a creditor on questionable security. Dumas the younger, who was present, positively screamed with delight.

"Are you aware," whispered his neighbour at table, "that the person alluded to is your father?"

"My father!" retorted the author of the "Demi-monde." "Impossible! Do you suppose for a moment, if he had been the hero of the adventure, that he would have missed the opportunity of chronicling it in his 'Memoirs'?"

SAXON CHURCHES.

NO ONE is more unpatriotic than your theorist. If facts refuse to agree with his fancies, so much the worse for them. He will undermine and batter with anything that comes to hand, and will never rest until he has brought them down.

A generation ago the architects all set their faces against "Saxon" art. Their grandfathers had given the name to three-fifths of the round-headed doors and windows in our village churches. Then came a reaction; "the Saxon," coming from a stoneless country, was supposed to have stuck to his habit of building what he did build in wood, until it seemed as if the wooden church of Greenstead, in Essex, was the only thing that remained to us from pre-Norman days.

It was a time of destructive criticism; Niebuhr had lately been knocking the bottom out of old Roman history, teaching that Romulus, and Remus, and Tarquin and the tall poppies, and Mucius Scaevola, and the rest are myths; and so the architects, forgetting their Bede, who writes that in the seventh century Benedict Biscop built, with Gaulish masons, stone churches at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, and that Bishop Wilfrid did the same at Hexham and York and Ripon, and forgetting, too, that their example could not fail to be followed elsewhere, at any rate till the Danes began their ravages, roundly asserted that Saxon architecture is a myth, that even such towns as Barnack and Earl's Barton were built after the Conquest, or, at least, after Norman influence came in like a flood under that half-Norman, Edward the Confessor.

They had not studied their Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, or they would have seen, in the illuminations, churches and towers evidently of stone; but stranger than the want of research was the want of patriotism. One can understand Mr. Parker and his school vehemently insisting that the Irish round towers, since they are certainly older than the English invasion, must be pre-Irish and pre-historic, raised by Cuthites, Arkites, or other mythical builders, because "Pat," being a mere savage, could never have had the skill to build them. That is natural; Mr. Parker was not an Irishman, and "Pat" is always fair game; but why treat our Saxon forefathers in the same unhandsome way?

Well, now the pendulums, both historical and architectural, are swinging the other way. Niebuhr is at a discount. We do not accept all about the kings of Rome just as Livy tells it; a good many of us would draw the line at the wolf, for instance, or at Father Mars; but we by no means throw it all overboard.

And so with churches; we do not say, as they did when Horace Walpole began to make Gothic architecture fashionable, that every round arch which is not after the symmetrical pattern of those in so many of our cathedrals is "Saxon;" but we do say that up and down England there is a deal of pre-Norman building still remaining.

Sir Gilbert Scott—"Lectures on Mediæval Architecture," ii. 35—sounded the note of the reaction. "They are clearly not Norman," he says, "for, with the single exception that their arches are round, they

have nothing in common with the specimens of that style erected in and after the Conqueror's reign."

There are other round-arched styles besides the Norman—the Rhenish, for instance, the North Italian, the Aquitanian, all varieties of the Romanesque, that is, Roman altered to meet the requirements of Christian building—and there is in these islands a Saxon-Romanesque, and an Irish or Scotie ditto, besides that which should, in strictness, be called Norman-Romanesque.

Now, of pre-Norman Romanesque, the finest remains are in the North, the part Christianised not by Saint Augustine's followers, who never gained a hold on any of the country north of London, but by Scotie (Irish) missionaries, such as Aidan, Colman, Begogh (Saint Bee), etc. These men had been used to stone buildings in their own land, and doubtless they would bring the art in with them; and the likeness between the sculptures on North of England and on early Irish buildings is so marked as to warrant the belief that the same architects erected both. Compare, for instance, the font at Cotham in Yorkshire, with the carvings at Kells or at Kilcullen, co. Kildare; and the cross at Winwick in Lancashire with the Irish crosses—among the carvings on this Lancashire cross is a square bell of the Scotie type—and the carvings at Adel in Yorkshire, quaint beasts "all made out of the carver's brain," full of individuality, yet closely akin in spirit to the strange animals on the Scotie sculptured stones. On Kirkburn font, in Yorkshire, there is a bit of Scotie interlaced work, roughly done, sandwiched between the rest of the much plainer and easier bordering, as if the Scotie master carver had begun it and his Saxon apprentices had been unable to finish in his style. On the font in Walton-on-the-Hill, near Liverpool, the Flight into Egypt, sadly weather-worn, is not unlike the same subject on the font of Clonard Abbey; on Kirkby font, near Liverpool, the carvings are very Scotie, Adam and Eve, with the serpent, being exactly like the figures found on so many Irish high crosses. At Kirkby Stephen, Westmoreland, there is an Irish cross, on which the devil is bound in Scotie knots with what the old Irish stories call "the three smalls" (wrists, and ankles, and small of the back).]

In the undoubtedly early Norman, of which the chapel in the Tower of London is a type, sculpture is as rare as it

is profuse in the pre-Norman Irish; and, as it abounds in the little north-country churches, of which I have named a few, the inference is that they, since they are certainly not late Norman, are pre-Norman, and that the spirit which guided and inspired their decorators was Scotie. Of course the Saxon, in his own Germany, had never built with stone; his churches, had he followed his instincts, would have been like those of the Norwegians nowadays, with less elaborate carving; but his Scotie missionaries taught him to rear stone buildings, and he soon became such an adept in the work that, not only in the North, where Scotie influence was predominant, but more or less all over England some of his work still remains. Often, where the rest of the Saxon church was pulled down and modernised, the tympanum (half-circle between the lintel and door-arch) is preserved; often, as at Saint Nicholas, Ipswich, slabs carved in the flat Saxon style are found let into a much later wall. Churches, which are in the main, and not merely in a few of their carvings, "Saxon," are not many. A few of the most notable are: Brixworth, Northampton, in which county there are several Saxon towers, as Barnack, Earl's Barton, etc.; Whittingham, and Hexham, Northumberland; Kirkdale, Yorkshire (where is the bone-cave, beloved of geologists); Jarrow, and Monk's Wearmouth, Durham; a great number in Lincolnshire, Heapham near Gainsborough, and Scartho near Grimsby, and Stow near Lincoln, the old Sidnaceaster, amongst them; in Norfolk, Great Dunham and Newton, both near Swaffham; in Gloucester, Deerhurst and Daglingworth, and others; Boarhunt, close to Fareham, and Corhampton, near Bishop's Waltham, in Hants; Sompting, in Sussex; Kingsbury, in Middlesex, between Harrow and Hendon; in Essex, Trinity Church, Colchester (curious because it is chiefly of Roman brick), and Felstead; Cambridge, St. Benet's; Kent, the ruined church in Dover Castle. There are many more; but everyone who means to "do" a county, will of course read up in "Murray," or some such guide. And there are worse ways of spending a holiday than exploring the churches of a district. Here and there you come upon a group of architectural gems—as in parts of Northampton, South Lincoln, and the Lynn Marshland. But an enthusiast will not pass over an insignificant-looking church; even if it is not mentioned in "Murray" it may have interesting features. A

cyclist can easily, too, carry heel-ball and lining-paper, so as to take rubbings of any brasses; though these, being luxuries imported from the Continent, are rare beyond the eastern and south-eastern counties. I cannot imagine a more acceptable present to an Australian or New Zealand museum than a set of good rubbings of church-brasses. Put some turmeric or chrome yellow with your heel-ball and the effect will be improved, and the youth of Greater England will be able to see what sort of monuments well-to-do English folks set up in the fourteenth and two following centuries.

Of Saxon building, the chief peculiarities are what is called long and short work—seen especially at the angles of the towers, where it bonds the rubble walls together more neatly than a buttress; in the small windows dividing baluster, with a flat stone (abacus) at top and bottom; often in small doors and windows a triangular instead of a round head. Once noted, these features are sure never to be forgotten. The sculpture, when there is any, often is (as I have said) Scotie, i.e. Irish, in character; and Scotie art is called by one of the latest and best writers on the subject (Mr. Romilly Allen, "Early Christian Symbolism"), "Byzantine intensely Celticised." In judging of a sculpture, if there is no date and no record, the best way is to "come to the book." Everybody has seen reproductions of some of the Irish illuminated manuscripts—the finest in the Western world, at any rate; if your sculpture at all resembles them in detail, you may conclude that it was wrought by Anglo-Saxon workmen educated by some of the Scotie missionaries who did all that had been done to Christianise England north of Thames, and who, as their reward, were rejected in favour of Wilfrid and his Roman monks by the ungrateful Oswin, because, as "Peter had the keys," he thought it was best to keep on good terms with Peter's friends. Even when the rest of the church is of later date, a Saxon doorway or the moulding of a window is often preserved; and when you see a projecting moulding carried round the whole outside of a door or window, like a frame, you know that it is Saxon work.

Another peculiarity is a very narrow chancel arch; at St. Lawrence, Bradford-on-Avon, one of the most perfect of our undoubted Saxon churches, it is only three feet five inches wide. This church may be the very one which Aldhelm built early in the eighth century. It is only

within the last few years that it has been cleared of rubbish and plaster—"restored," not in the too-frequent sense of being rendered unrecognisable with brand-new work replacing the old. It contains, on each side of the chancel arch, an angel in the bas-relief manner spoken of above. They have the lanky limbs and long fluttering drapery which are so universal in the figures in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.

Daglingworth, too, three miles from Cirencester, where there was a Roman station, of which other remains have been found besides a fine tessellated pavement, and where the shelly limestone takes a better polish than Devonshire marble, has a distinctly Saxon church—"long and short work" at all the angles, a window made out of a Roman inscribed stone, the sundial over the south door as unmistakably Saxon as that at Kirkdale, and two very curious sculptures by the narrow chancel arch: Christ in glory, and St. Peter with the peculiar "Saxon" key figured in St. Ethelwold's "Benedictional" (about A.D. 975) in the Duke of Devonshire's library. Both figures have a kind of puzzle girdle, the straps passing through a ring.

Sompting, close to Shoreham, has a Saxon tower, fully one hundred feet high to the point of the low slated spire, which grows out of four very pointed gables. The door in this tower has very un-Norman capitals to its pillar and pilasters; some of the windows are triangle-headed, others divided by the ribs or pilasters which run from the base to the top of the gables, and on which are repeated the capitals of the west door.

Deerhurst, close to Tewkesbury, had a royal palace, which, in 715, was made into a monastery. This was destroyed by the Danes; but Duke Odda rebuilt it in Edward the Confessor's time, and his dedication stone, dated 1053, was dug up amid the ruins of the chancel—destroyed in the Civil War—and is now with the Arundel marbles at Oxford. Here, too, the tower is very high, and has apparently been capped like Sompting. The masonry is even rougher than most Saxon work—such a contrast to the beautifully-jointed ashlar of the Irish round towers—wide-jointed "rag-work" with some Roman tiles built in in herring-bone fashion. Over most of the doorways are rude sculptures. What was the chancel arch—now the east wall, the chancel being down—has a dripstone ornamented with grotesque animals. The font has an interlaced moulding like the

mouldings on the Scotie crosses. The double window in the east of the tower is not Scotie, nor Norman, but evidently imitation Roman; as if a priest, who had been to Rome, had drawn the design, and the clumsy workman had striven to carry it out.

If you are ever at Ludlow—of which both church and castle are well worth seeing, the latter having inside its precincts a perfect little “round” church, like a miniature Temple Church—you should walk out to Stanton Lacy. Here, though triplets of Early English lancets have been knocked out in the transepts, the rest of the church is Saxon, and the “long and short” pilaster strips up the wall have a most curious effect.

In York city, the tower of St. Mary Bishop-hill Junior is nearly all Roman brick, herring-boned, and the balusters of its windows are just like wooden props stuck in under a flat stone.

Even St. Michael's Tower, Oxford, is edged with “long and short work,” and has balusters in its windows, though poor compared with those of St. Benet's, in the sister university, which, in turn, are less ornate than those in the richest of all our Saxon towers—Earl's Barton, near Daventry.

Mr. Romilly Allen thinks that much of our Saxon work is older than A.D. 1000, though Cnut began his reign (1017) by a general church and abbey restoration, and built a specially grand church, we are told, at Ashenden, near Aylesbury. There had been a lull a little before his time, owing to the strong belief that the world was to come to an end now that Christ's reign of a thousand years was ended. How such a notion grew up it is hard to conceive. A Thuringian hermit started it, and, as it spread, it gained strength, till, in parts of France, they neglected to sow their corn.

To sum up, then, there is a good deal of unquestionably “Saxon” work up and down the country, especially in church towers; and there is a good deal more of probably “Saxon” carving built into the walls of later churches, and this, in the North of England especially, often bears such a markedly Scotie stamp as to make us think that the sculptors were working under the eyes of Irish missionaries.

Derbyshire is specially rich in such carvings. At Parwich, near Ashbourn (where was a Roman camp), the door-tympanum is very Scotie; so it is at Hognaston, near Wirksworth. Both represent the Agnus Dei with nimbed cross

(“flag” it becomes in later art), held by its right fore hoof, while around are strange creatures of all kinds—serpents, ravens, wild boars, hyenas, panthers; the idea being that over all these, each of which typifies some evil passion, the Lamb has power. At Hognaston, a man, sore beset by the ravening beasts, is taking refuge with the Lamb.

At Ilam, close to Ashbourn, the font is sculptured in the same style; and in one compartment the Lamb, on whose cross is perched the Dove, is looking towards a gruesome beast and causing it to disgorge the man whom it has swallowed. Sometimes, as at Hoveringham, Notts, an archer—in this case a centaur, typical of some evil principle—is shooting at the Lamb.* At Ault Hucknall, near Mansfield, the sculptor's fancy has taken even more than Scotie range. In the lower compartment of the tympanum a fearful winged dragon is rushing at the cross, which seems as if it had risen from the earth to protect a knight who, with shield, and hauberk, and heavy sword, stands on the far side of it, awaiting the monster. Above are two strange creatures: a centaur with nimbus round his head, palm-branch in his right, and cross-topped staff in his left hand, and moving as if to attack him, a strange huge beast—which, had it a human head, might be the man-eating “manticora”—followed by a little dog.

Among early beasts in manuscripts, we must remember that tiger means a serpent (sometimes winged). The way in which hunters rob it of its young is to place mirrors in the track by which it will return to its den. When it sees its beauty in the glass, it is so charmed that it remains rooted to the spot, till its young are carried far away out of reach. Here the symbolism is to teach that we are like tigers in whose path the devil places temptations of all kinds, which when we gaze at we forget our souls. One creature, the phoenix—a type of the resurrection—gave rise to a curious mistake; the word also means palm-tree, and the verse in the ninety-second Psalm is in mediæval works rendered “the righteous shall flourish as a phoenix.”

Scotie-looking, probably Saxon carvings, are not unknown in the southern counties.

* The Sagittarius (archer) is of doubtful symbolism. Sometimes, in contest with “the savage man,” it typifies the soul warring with the body; sometimes, when centaur, it symbolises Mr. Facing-both-ways—the being whose two natures both assert themselves.

At Melbury Bubb, in Dorset, on the font, is a fine example. Among many other beasts are the crocodile and the serpent, the latter forming an interlaced bordering. This is a symbol of the resurrection; according to the story the crocodile lies asleep in the mud with his mouth open, in crawls the serpent, and forthwith bursts asunder the entrails of the beast and comes forth alive.

Going back to Derbyshire, at Ashford in the water, where the fine black marble is quarried, over the door is the tree of life, typifying God the Father, the shadow being the Son, the fruit the Holy Ghost. This is being attacked on one side by a boar, on the other by a lion.

Enough of Saxon, and presumably Saxon sculptures. The sculptured crosses, like those at Hackness, near Whitby, and at Collingham, near Weatherby, Yorkshire, and Bewcastle, on the Cumberland edge of Northumberland, and the sculptured stones like those at Penrith, are still more Scotie in their details than fonts and tympana. They are like the high crosses of which so many still remain in Ireland. And if you cross the border into Wales or Scotland, or sail over to the Isle of Man, you will have any number of sculptured stones with knot-work and interlaced work, and all the marks of what, in the Middle Ages, was called the "opus Scoticum."

One of the most beautiful examples is a stone coffin, dug up a few years ago at Govan near Glasgow. The whole of this, sides and top, except the panels filled with figures of animals, is covered with the most elaborate interlaced work. It is, as Mr. R. Allen says, a shame that casts of such monuments are not to be found at South Kensington. We have Japanese pots, spider-legged furniture, della robbia, and half-a-dozen other kinds of pottery; we have all the curios which could be picked up in Persia, heaped together in a sort of colossal Storrs and Mortimer's; and of pre-Norman art in these islands the only samples in the Museum are the crosses at Kirk Braddon in Man, at Irton, and at Gosforth in Cumberland, and these are in a corner of a room filled with the most miscellaneous collection ever brought together.

It is a disgrace that, amid all our art museums, we have not a museum of Christian Archæology. Besides its other uses, it would stimulate research. The home tourist would work with double zest at his old churches, if he knew that a national "department" would welcome

a drawing or photograph of any new bit of Saxon work which he might come across.

As for crosses, the finest are in Ireland. There will be a rush of tourists over there this year; and they had better take with them some little knowledge of Irish art; for while so much political gas is being given off, they are not likely to learn much of that kind of thing in the country itself. Monasterboice, and Kells, and Moone Abbey—but any good guide-book will give a list. Study it now; it is such a nuisance to find out after that you were close to some fine thing, and did not know of its existence. Only do let everyone who can, see the very curious carvings on the crosses at Castledermot in Kildare, not far from Carlow. And if you can give time in Dublin to study one of the Irish manuscripts, you will notice how the illuminations and the contemporary stone-work illustrate one another.

There are plenty of other English crosses beside: the three named above, and among them, those at Aycliffe in Durham, at Alnmouth in Northumberland, and at Bradbourne in Derbyshire, near Wirksworth, have what Mr. Allen calls "Hiberno-Saxon forms of ornament"; the work, as I said before, of English hands guided by Scotie minds.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

WHITSUNTIDE.

WHITSUNTIDE is generally believed to be a corruption of "White-Sunday," a name given to this day as one of the great baptismal seasons of the year in the past, when all admitted to the rite appeared in white garments, as emblematic of the purity of heart which baptism is supposed to work, and also to commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost. Some there are, however, who hold that the name is a corruption of the French "huit" (eight), because Whit-Sunday is the eighth Sunday after Easter.

The day corresponds to the Jewish feast of Pentecost, instituted in the wilderness in commemoration of the giving of the law from Mount Sinai.

Whitsuntide has always been regarded as a particularly holy season by the Catholic Church, and it is still so observed amongst Protestants. In the Church of Rome, high mass is celebrated with all the splendour which that Church loves to infuse into its services on great occasions.

Our forefathers as much as, perhaps more than, ourselves were holiday-makers on Whit-Monday and Tuesday, and appear to have indulged in all kinds of exercises and amusements, for which, in many parishes, a stimulus was provided, and out of which the Church claimed a due share of the profits.

A place, termed the Church house, was set apart, and a quantity of ale, termed Whitsun or Church ale, was brewed, and sold to the parishioners who came to the feast. The profits thus accruing were applied to the necessary repairs of the church, and sometimes, when no repairs were needed, to charitable and other purposes.

Drink, however, in those days was not what goes by that name now; it was pure, and not a skilful decoction of mystery and colouring fluids.

Gambling, as it was called, consisted of quoits, archery, nine-pins, and such-like amusements, dignified now by the name of sports. It is somewhat significant that, as in everything else to promote the good of the working classes, the Church always took the lead in the "good old days" as organisers of amusements for the benefit of the body corporeal.

In Douce's time, some century and a quarter ago, a Whitsun ale was thus conducted:

"Two persons are chosen previously to the meeting, to be lord and lady of the ale, who dress as suitably as they can to the characters they assume. A large empty barn, or some such building is provided for the lord's hall, and fitted up with seats to accommodate the company. Here they assemble to dance and regale in the best manner their circumstances and the place will afford; and each young fellow treats his girl to a riband or favour. The lord and lady honour the hall with their presence, attended by the steward, sword-bearer, purse-bearer, and mace-bearer, with their several badges or ensigns of office. They have likewise a train-bearer or page, and a fool or jester, drest in a party-coloured jacket, whose ribaldry or gesticulation contribute not a little to the entertainment of some part of the company."

In the Brentford accounts for the Whitsuntide ale, 1624, the gains are thus set forth: "Imprimis, cleared by pigeonholes, £4 19s.; ditto hocking, £7 3s. 7d.; ditto riffling, £2; victualling, £8 0s. 2d.; total £22 2s. 9d."

It will thus be seen that it was rather a profitable affair.

In the time of William the Conqueror, Whitsuntide was celebrated with various sports and tournaments, which were partly superseded in the time of Edward the First, by the introduction of the miracle plays or mysteries, which in that age were of service in making the people better acquainted with the leading events of sacred history. The Puritans tried in vain to check the excesses to which the sports had given way, but the custom gradually decayed of its own accord, and the more modern village festivals and club-meetings took their place. Notwithstanding its decay, we may yet trace back the Friendly Society gatherings, preceded with a service in the Parish Church, to the Whitsun ales and miracle plays, and further still to the love-feasts of the primitive Christians.

In Poor Robin's Almanack for 1676, "Stool Ball," and "Barley Break," are referred to as Whitsun sports. The same authority also says that,

At Islington a fair they hold,
Where ales and cakes are to be sold;
At Highgate and at Holloway
The like is kept there every day;
At Tot'nam Court and Kentish Town,
And all those places up and down.

Drayton also says:

In his gay baldric, at his low grassy board,
With flowers, clouted cream, and country dainties
stored,
And whilst the bagpipe plays, each lusty jocund
swain
Quaffs syllabus in cans.

Ben Jonson tells us that

The rout of rural folk come thronging in,
(Their rudeness then is thought no sin)
The jolly wassail walks the often round,
And in their cups their cares are drowned.

This refers to the feasting and general hospitality, such conspicuous traits of our great-grandfathers on holy-days, when the Squire and the farmer threw open their doors, and bade everyone welcome.

The festival of Whitsuntide is by no means peculiar to England; the southern Slavs keep their "Slawa" feast during Whitsun week. This commences on the Monday or Tuesday, and lasts for three days. There are two distinct ceremonials, the religious, and the social; the former consisting of the breaking of the cake, and the latter the drinking of the toasts. The "Slawa" is to all intents and purposes the household god, and once the blessing of the Church has been secured, the festival is spent in open-handed hospitality.

On Whit-Tuesday, 1786, there was celebrated at Hendon, Middlesex, a burlesque imitation of the Olympic games. One prize was a gold-laced hat, to be grinned for by six candidates, who were placed on a platform, with horse-collars to exhibit through. Over their heads was printed :

Detur Tetrioni;
or
The ugliest grinner
Shall be the winner.

Each party grinned separately for three minutes, and then all united in one grand exhibition of facial contortion. An objection was lodged against the winner on the ground that he had rinsed his mouth with vinegar.

A similar performance was gone through at Stratford-on-Avon in recent years ; but no adults were found foolish enough to make displays of themselves before an assembled multitude, and lads had the honour of competing for the prizes.

At Whitsuntide, for centuries, mystery plays were performed at Chester, the first, on the Passion of Our Lord, being written by Gregory of Nazianzen and a German nun named Roswitha, who lived in the tenth century, and wrote six Latin dramas on the stories of saints and martyrs. These plays were usually performed in churches, but more frequently in the open air and other convenient places. They were extremely popular, and though the mixture of sacred and profane was truly shocking, yet the people were taught by them scenes from the life of our Saviour which would otherwise have been sealed books. The first appearance of mystery plays at Chester was Whitsuntide, 1268, and the various guilds took each their respective part in the representation. Some idea may be gathered of the dialogue from the Ober-Ammergau plays elsewhere mentioned. When the Passion Play ceased, pageants followed, after the style of that at Coventry.

The celebrated Greenwich Fair was formerly held on Whit-Monday, and was continued until the disorder that followed became so great that the authorities were compelled to put an end to the custom.

Whitsuntide, in Scotland, was one of the usual terms for regulating the letting of houses and farms. It was formerly moveable, but was fixed by statute in 1690 to mean May the fifteenth. In many respects, however, local usage overrides the statute. Thus, in Edinburgh, the term of entry in a house is the twenty-fifth of May.

The dove being an emblem of the Holy Ghost, there was, in the "days long ago," a figure of a dove suspended by a cord from the ceiling so as to alight on the high altar during service on Whit-Sunday. In others, figures of cloven tongues or red rose-leaves were similarly introduced. The latter practice is still retained at Messina ; but generally these scenical representations have been discontinued.

In some parts of the East, as well as the West, the practice prevails of decorating churches with evergreens and flowers, as is done in this country at Christmas.

In the reign of Richard the First, according to the old romance of "Sir Bevy's of Hampton," knights rode at Whitsuntide on steeds and palfreys over a three-mile course for "forty pounds of ready gold." From this it may be inferred that racing was a recognised pastime at that early period of English history.

Rudder, in his "History of Gloucestershire," relates that in the neighbourhood of St. Briacola, formerly, after divine service on Whit-Sunday, pieces of bread and cheese were distributed to the congregation at church. To defray the expense of this, every householder in the parish paid a penny to the churchwardens, which was said to be for the liberty of cutting and taking wood in Hadnalls. Tradition affirms that this privilege was obtained of some Earl of Hereford, then lord of the Forest of Dean, at the instance of his lady, upon the same hard terms as those upon which Lady Godiva obtained relief for the citizens of Coventry.

In the town of Hinckley, Leicestershire, there was formerly held at Whitsuntide a fair known as the "Millers' Fair," so called from the fact that all the millers from the adjoining villages assembled and formed a grand procession, headed by one whom they termed the "King of the millers."

In mediæval Western Europe, Whitsuntide was a period of great festivity, and was considered a season of more importance than can be easily explained by the incidents connected with it recorded in the Gospel, or by any later Christian legends attached to it. It was one of the great festivals of kings and chieftains in the romances of the Middle Ages. It was that especially on which King Arthur is represented as holding his most splendid court. The sixth chapter of the "Morte d'Arthur" of Sir Thomas Malory tells us how "Then King Arthur removed into

Wales, and let crie a great feast, that it should be holden at Pentecost, after the coronation of him at the city of Carleon (Chester)," and later on, "So King Arthur had ever a custom that at the high feast of Pentecost especially, afore al other high feasts in the yeare, he would not goe that day to meat until he had heard or seene some great adventure or mervaille."

At the present time hiring fairs are held in the South of Scotland and North of England at this period of the year, but these are, for the most part, confined to farm servants. In some districts the servants stand in a row at certain parts of the street, ready to treat with proposing employers. These hirings, however, are now not so much used, both masters and servants finding it more convenient to make their engagements in a better manner.

Whitsuntide customs, with their vices and their virtues, are fast dying out, and in the place of morris-dancing and mystery plays, we have Sunday School feasts, and excursion trains which start at some abnormal hour from any part of England to remote sea-side resorts, or to great centres of population where the "sights" are numerous. The least excuse now is sufficient to send the ordinary citizen off upon his travels; and, all things considered, it will, I am sure, be admitted that this is the best way of spending at least this great holiday of the Church.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART II.

CHAPTER I. THE HERO'S RETURN.

IN the old city of Woolsborough, there was nothing to mark the lapse of more than four years. Day by day, Dr. Chanter's organ and the Cathedral choir sent up their music to the lofty stone roof, possibly higher still. Week by week, crowds came on Sunday evening to listen to their favourite preachers, as Paul and Celia did once, and perhaps some of them altered their lives a little in consequence. Sometimes, at sunset, the great west window was illumined, as Paul had seen it when he came back from that walk of his. Down in the back streets leading to the river, which flowed on under its bridges as

usual, men and women lounged about and sat on their begrimed doorsteps, and would as soon have thought of climbing up into heaven on a rainbow, as of going up the hill and across the Close to the great church whose bells shook the air all round them, and where their forerunners certainly worshipped four hundred years ago.

Canon and Mrs. Percival still lived at River Gate. They spent most of the year there now, having given up their little house at Holm. The Canon was beginning to be a little restless, and secretly to think himself overlooked by Bishops and Government; but in appearance he was unchanged. Mrs. Percival had gone through a good deal of worry, and there were a few more lines in her face; but she had found peace and comfort in doing up her drawing-room, which now was really beautiful; in it, Colonel Ward's old china and French enamels had at last found a sphere where they could shine.

And now Vincent had come home from India, and his mother had welcomed him with real, heartfelt joy. On a lovely April afternoon, while the sun was shining peacefully over the terraces, bright with spring flowers, and the Cathedral bells in a soft dreamy cadence were chiming for service, she was strolling up and down with her hand in Vincent's arm, and they were talking of things which had happened since he went away. Vincent, who had arrived the night before, was really glad to see his mother again. He was pleased at the loving welcome she gave him; he had been roughing it a good deal of late years, had been through a small war with some frontier tribes, where he had been slightly wounded, and could now, with her at least, be a hero to his heart's content. He was a thin, yellow, sunburnt, fierce-looking man; he looked, in fact, even more positively ill-tempered than when he went out, four years and a half ago; but in this case, perhaps, appearances were deceitful; his mother had not heard him say a cross word yet, and thought he had come home charming.

Of course they soon began to talk of Celia, a rather painfully interesting subject to them both.

"She certainly was the making of the place, that summer," Vincent said, as his eyes wandered over the garden where Celia used to walk. "How confoundedly pretty she was, the little witch! I couldn't get her out of my head for a long time. Is she as pretty now?"

"I suppose so," said Mrs. Percival. "I

believe she is very well, and happy, and all that. You know I have only seen her once since her marriage, and that was in Paris, two years ago. She has asked us to go down and see them, but I really didn't much care about it, and your father quite disliked the idea. He was so shocked at her turning Roman Catholic."

"Well, the best thing she could do, as she married one," said Vincent. "I suppose he and his people insisted on it."

"Not exactly, but it smoothed over difficulties. Last year there was some talk of their coming to stay with the Lefroys, which would have been very awkward for us. I was glad it was given up."

"Nonsense! Who would think it awkward? Nobody but my father. I wish they would come this year. I should like to see Celia again."

"I don't care very much to see her," said Mrs. Percival sadly.

"Why, my dear old woman, she has done you no harm. As for her breaking off with that ass, Romaine, it was quite right; she never could have cared for him. Besides, I understood you to say that they quarrelled, and it was as much his doing as hers."

"I never could quite make out the history of that affair," said Mrs. Percival.

"Paul was devoted to her. I feel convinced she must have done something that cut him up terribly, though she never would allow it to me. Something was wrong, just at the time of dear old Colonel Ward's death. But Celia would never have broken off with Paul if that money had not been left her. That, of course, made everything easy. She was ready to find out, then, that she and Paul could never get on together."

"I say she was right."

"She was heartless and ungrateful, Vincent. Well, I soon began to see what would happen. She had taken a violent fancy to these French people; and as soon as she knew of her fortune, and had broken off her engagement, which she did instantly, she absolutely threw herself into their arms. Nothing was ever settled in such a frightful hurry. I think even M. de Montmirail was almost ashamed, having only made our acquaintance through poor Paul, but he was desperately in love with Celia; so was his daughter, and so was his mother-in-law, Madame de Ferrand. She came to talk to me about it. Of course, Celia was perfectly independent. I could not influence her one way or the

other, and she made up her mind at once. She declared," said Mrs. Percival, laughing a little, "that she was in love for the first time in her life. I did not quite believe her; I think it was partly pique, and partly excitement, and the fun of doing anything so unusual! M. de Montmirail was very good-looking, too, and just as much her slave as Paul, only in a more amusing sort of way. Celia and I had laughed about his admiration for her before I ever dreamed of her marrying him. I knew about the money, though, before she did. Colonel Ward told me as a secret; she was to know on her wedding-day."

"I wonder the Colonel left it to her absolutely," said Vincent. "I wonder he didn't make her marrying Paul Romaine a condition; that was weak, Paul being such a favourite of his. He never meant to send his money to France, poor old chap."

"Ah! that was Paul's doing," said Mrs. Percival.

"How do you mean?"

"Dr. Graves, the Colonel's doctor, you know, told your father something about it when he was last at Holm. I think the lawyer who made the will had told him, when everybody was so surprised at Paul's engagement being broken off suddenly, and all the preparations stopped, poor boy! It seems that the Colonel told Paul what he was going to do, and asked him whether the legacy to Celia should be conditional. And he said 'certainly not.' If he had said 'yes,' no doubt everything would have come to him. The lawyer and Dr. Graves were both sure that that was the Colonel's intention."

"Of course, Romaine never imagined a slip was possible," said Vincent. "Just the sort of fellow to go blundering on with his eyes shut."

"Oh, I don't know," said Mrs. Percival. "There was a shadow, even then. There was something wrong; he was not happy about Celia. Directly after the Colonel died, he rushed over to Paris, and they had rather a scene, I know, though Celia made light of it to me. In that affair of the will, I believe Paul behaved very generously."

"Behaved like a muff, I should say," said Vincent. "And what became of him? Where is the poor forsaken youth now?"

"I really don't know. He went off to America as soon as he could, and I think he has been all over the world. I

have never seen him since. As for Holm and the old house, it really is too sad and desolate now. It was all left unfinished, and has been standing empty ever since. The old servants look after it, and the agent sees to the estate, and the woods, and so on. Colonel Ward's dogs live there; his cottage is never even let in the summer; ours is sometimes. I wish Paul would write to me, for certainly the crash was no fault of mine. I was very sorry. I always liked him so much."

"I wonder what it was that they quarrelled about," said Vincent, after a minute or two. "I wonder if it can have been about a letter of mine to Celia, to which she sent me a very cold answer, the day after Colonel Ward died. In that letter there were certainly no signs of her breaking off with Romaine. Therefore I was startled when I heard of all the changes so soon after."

"What was your letter about?" said Mrs. Percival. "I heard nothing of it, I think."

"Not likely that you would. I suggested to Celia that she might as well throw him over before it was too late, and marry me. I deceived myself into an idea that she liked me. But that niece of yours is a desperate flirt."

"I think she is. But that was very wrong of you, Vincent. However, I don't see how Paul could possibly have known of that; she would never have told him."

"No; I don't suppose she would," said Captain Percival, taking no notice of his mother's gentle blame.

"I often thought of your fancy for Celia, which vexed me so much at the time," she went on. "When I heard that she was to have all that money, my first thought was of you—how it might have taken away all difficulties."

"Yes, it was hardly fair that a Frenchman should have carried off my luck," said Vincent. "But I suppose she liked him best. Queer girl! Well, she broke Romaine's heart, perhaps, but not mine. I have lived very comfortably without her."

"Everything is for the best, I dare say," said Mrs. Percival peacefully. "When Celia lived with me, in spite of her pretty face and pleasant ways, I never was quite sure about her. She was selfish, like her poor father; she had very little real feeling. She liked to be liked: but beyond that. I don't think

she cared much about making other people happy. Well, my dear, we have talked about her enough. Now let me hear something about yourself."

This was a subject on which Vincent was always ready to enlarge. He had a fine stock of grievances, which were generally sent home by post; but they naturally wanted talking over. To-day, however, he was less self-occupied than usual, and the subject of Celia seemed to linger in his mind. After some time, when his mother suggested going in to tea, he delayed her to ask a few more questions.

"You hear from the young woman sometimes, I suppose? What sort of life does she lead? Is she in Paris a good deal?"

"Only for a few weeks in the year. At first they were there very often, when Madame de Ferrand was alive, and they went to stay with her. But she died two years ago; and now they live chiefly down at the old Château in the country, where they have plenty of neighbours, and have been very busy restoring the house—with Celia's money. M. de Montmirail is very fond of the place, and very popular there; he manages a lot of public business. His daughter is growing up; she must be seventeen or eighteen now."

"Does Celia find her a bore?"

"No, I think not; she always speaks of her kindly. The girl is very fond of her, I believe."

"I should rather like to see that household. Madame la Marquise! What a joke!" said Vincent, as he followed his mother in at the drawing-room window.

CHAPTER II. MADAME DE MONTMIRAIL

It was a bright May morning in France; one of those days which the people there call "*jours de cristal*," so clear and transparent is the air. The world lay in brilliant sunshine and black shadow; the trees were motionless, only now and then a gentle breath brought wafts of scent from the acacia and pink may. All shades of tender green, and brown, and gold, were painted as the pre-Raphaelites saw them, on a clear hard background of blue, dazzling sky. Old Pierre was already going round to shut the shutters, and let down the sun-blinds outside the salon windows, for Madame la Marquise could not endure rooms flooded with light. Monsieur le Marquis, who was of a different opinion, and sometimes threatened—though he

never carried out his threat — to pull shutters open and blinds up in the full glare of midday, had just driven off in his dog-cart to the station, so that Pierre could work his will unrestrained. Pierre was not particularly fond of his English mistress, who, finding herself absolute ruler, had not thought much about being popular with the old servants. In fact, she had imported a household of new ones, only keeping Pierre and Suzanne because it seemed impossible to send them away, and Suzanne was useful in looking after Antoinette. Pierre's ferocious honesty and loyalty were also good in their way. There might have been two parties in the house, Mademoiselle having her passionate partisans both there and in the village, headed by Pierre and Suzanne. But Mademoiselle herself was far too loyal and gentle for any complication of this sort.

She had walked down to the avenue to look after her father as he drove away, and was coming slowly back across the broad, white, sunlit court, an old Clumber spaniel walking gravely beside her, and a little black-and-tan terrier, Rataplan, running here and there.

Antoinette had grown a good deal since she was fourteen, but she was by no means tall, and she did not hold herself very well. She had very little colour, but the soft cream tint of her complexion was not unhealthy; her features, of course, had all their young, delicate beauty; though her face was grave in repose, her large dark eyes were full of smiles and sweetness. Her hair was black, and thick, and curly as ever, though it no longer fell in a mane upon her shoulders. People who had known her mother, the Marquise, who had died so young, were startled by the likeness. Still Antoinette, nearly eighteen, hardly looked grown up. She tied her hair together with a red or blue ribbon; practised her music two hours a day; wrote translations; and went about all the morning in a large holland pinafore. She fed her chickens; worked in her own little garden; went to mass with Suzanne at six o'clock every morning; played games with the dogs; and now and then, though very seldom, went out walking, or driving, or riding with her father. She had had a governess for a year or two after she left the convent, chosen by her grandmother; but in this case Madame de Ferrand's arrangements had not been quite so happy as usual. The good woman worried

Antoinette, and bored the Marquise; she was sent away. Then Madame de Ferrand died, and Antoinette was quite left in the hands of her stepmother, who kissed her, and laughed, and told her she was much too clever and pretty to want any more education. Achille did not interfere; he never differed seriously with his wife; and so the girl was left to her own devices. Nobody cared; certainly not Antoinette, who accepted the situation, as it concerned only herself, with light-hearted indifference, and went on working at her lessons, steadily and alone. Suzanne was too happy that her little Mademoiselle should be restored to her. In truth, the only people who made any remarks on the subject were Monsieur and Madame de Cernay; though they had themselves planned a second marriage for Achille, they were never reconciled to his marrying an Englishwoman, and were ready to think the little Antoinette a much ill-used girl. They were an exception in the neighbourhood, which generally received the new Marquise with great kindness, and was never tired of admiring her beauty, and her good taste in dress and furniture. Achille, with all his good-nature, was a sensitive man; he knew well enough what the Cernays thought of him, and, as a matter of fact, the old intimate friendship between Saint-Bernard and La Tour Blanche had ceased for ever.

As Mademoiselle de Montmirail crossed the court, she was met and stopped by an old peasant-woman coming back from the kitchen door. The old, hard face was pinched with time and poverty; the cap was no longer white; the short jacket and petticoat were in rags; the feet were stuck bare into sabots; but a kindly smile and a quick torrent of jokes and compliments were ready for Mademoiselle. She must peep into the basket, and see what a fine store of scraps the cook had put into it; and then she must listen to a long story of the son who had come home from the army, and all his joy at seeing his old mother again.

This went on till the ball of the Château clanged out over their heads, making it plain that Mademoiselle must go in, so Mère Clopin trotted off with her smiling face, and her rags, and her basket, and Antoinette walked on. But quick steps came trotting up behind her, and she turned round to meet the postman, a soldierly-looking old fellow, with a long moustache and a faded sort of uniform,

who took off his cap with a great flourish, and begged to hand Mademoiselle the letters for the family.

With all these hindrances, Antoinette arrived at last in the dining-room to find her stepmother waiting for her, and the soup getting cold.

"Come, petite," said the Marquise, from the depths of her large chair, "must you be late because your father is not here?"

"Pardon, maman," said Antoinette. "I went down to the avenue to see the last of him, and then I stopped to talk to Mère Clopin, and then the postman overtook me—and here are your letters."

"That Mère Clopin of yours is an unconscionable old beggar," said Madame de Montmirail.

She took the letters in her pretty white hands, laid aside those belonging to her husband, and slowly looked over her own. She had a habit of talking English to Antoinette; besides that French was not by any means entirely easy to her, it seemed like carrying on the girl's education, and thus made her conscience comfortable. When M. de Montmirail was there, however, they generally talked French; and English, especially at meals, was a tremendous offence to old Pierre, who considered it supremely bad manners towards himself and the smart young man who helped him.

There was a sort of cloud that morning on Celia's face, generally bright and good-humoured enough. The cloud deepened as she looked over her letters, took out one from among them, and actually frowned over it. But she did not open it till she had finished her soup—cold soup being a thing she detested.

Some people thought that Celia had improved in looks since her marriage, and no one could deny that she was an exceedingly handsome woman. The clear look, the look of youth and innocence, and frank love of fun, which, in spite of all her faults, used to shine in her blue eyes, had darkened, hardened into something different, though the eyes were expressive enough still. The slight young figure was gone too; she had grown into a large and rather lazy-looking woman, and being English, unlike Madame de Cernay, had lost a good deal of life and brilliancy in the change. But still she was good-natured and kind, and ready to enjoy everything pleasant that came in her way. Perhaps she was a little disappointed in life,

on the whole, and had found it rather less easy than she expected to throw herself into all her new surroundings; perhaps her Achille was a little too much devoted, and bored her slightly sometimes with the overwhelming crowd of his attentions; still, she would not have liked any change in Achille, and she did not tell anyone what she felt in her heart—that these people were too good for her.

As to Achille, he had quite forgotten his first impression of Celia—"There is something of the devil in that woman." To him his wife was perfection; in the whole world there was no one so charming. He would have liked to tell M. de Cernay a great deal about her; in fact, the impossibility of this was the only trouble he had.

When the Marquise had finished her soup, she took up the letter and opened it, and read it deliberately. A slow flush stole over her delicate skin, and her lips trembled with the slightest of smiles.

The letter was evidently rather interesting.

"Let me see, what is to-day? Wednesday!" said the Marquise. "And your father will not be at home till Saturday."

"Perhaps not till Sunday," said Antoinette. "Unless you send for him, and then he will come home directly. I wish you would, maman! Five days; it is perfectly enormous!"

"Quite out of the question! Five days!" repeated Celia. "But I can't send for him unless you choose to be ill."

"I am never ill. You must be ill, yourself," said Antoinette, laughing.

"It is no use; we are all as strong as Hercules. Anyhow, I can tell him he must come home on Saturday, because—and yet why should it matter?"

She asked this question of herself, seemingly; then her eyes fell on the letter again; then she stared out of the window, playing an impatient tune with her fingers on the polished table. Then she drank her coffee, and then met the gaze of Antoinette's rather puzzled dark eyes.

"Ah, you don't know what I am talking about?" she said. "Tiens! Do you know this writing?" and she held up an envelope with the Paris post-mark.

"No," said Antoinette. "I never saw it before, but it is the writing of an Englishman. Papa's cousin, Sir John Lefroy, writes a little like that; but this is not from him."

"So you can find out an Englishman."

Don't look so amazed, *ma belle*. Come into the salon, and I will tell you all about it."

In the salon the sun-blinds were down, but long rays of light fell across the shining floor. It was a very different room from what it used to be, shabby, dingy, and damp-stained. The ceiling and chimney-piece were gorgeously painted, the walls were hung with fine old tapestry, and the rows of stately high-backed chairs relaxed so far as to admit a few very comfortable ones for the repose of modern bones. In the corners and the windows, great broad-leaved plants threw shadows. There was a good deal of rich colour, all subdued in tone. Everyone who saw the restored salon, agreed that Madame de Montmirail had made a distinguished success. Even Madame de Cernay was obliged to admire it, though she could not help saying that its one want was the want of original ideas. But this was absurd, after all, for with the "style Louis Treize" to guide you, what do you want with originality?

Celia sat down in one of the comfortable chairs, between two long lines of sunlight, and laid her letters on a table close by, except that interesting one, which she kept in her hand.

Antoinette, in her large pinafore, arranged herself not far off, her dark head bent forward to listen; she looked like a little image of polite attention.

"First I must tell you who this letter is from," said her stepmother. "It is from a certain man named Vincent Percival."

"A relation of Madame Percival?" said Antoinette.

"Not far wrong, *petite*. A near relation; her son—her only son—her only child, and therefore a great treasure—besides being my first cousin."

"Mais parfaitement!" murmured Antoinette.

"You are wondering that you never heard of him before? Well, he has been in India half his life—but stop, did not you hear me telling your father, some weeks ago, how he had been in a small fight or two on the frontier, and had been wounded in the shoulder? You were not there? Well, it doesn't matter; so it was. I have not seen him for four years; before I was married. I knew he had come home; I heard it from my aunt the other

day. Now this celebrated hero is in Paris, and writes to ask if he may come down here on Saturday. We used to be friends, you understand. He was kinder to me than some of my relations—when I was a very poor girl, and had no home."

"But then you will be delighted to see him. It is well; it is very well," said Antoinette, in her pretty, broken English.

"Yes, I should like to see him. Anyhow, I suppose he must come," said Celia, and then she dropped into silence, and looked gravely at the floor.

Antoinette sat watching her, smiling a little. She had never heard her stepmother speak with much kindness of her English relations, who seemed on the whole to have been a heartless set of people. It was supposed that Mrs. Percival, her aunt, had not been quite pleased at her marriage; then there was her change of religion, which of course made a barrier, though to Antoinette's mind the Anglican Church was a thing incomprehensible. This cousin evidently rose above the English and Protestant ideas of the family; and no doubt the very visible effort, the affectation almost, so unlike her general way of talking, with which Celia spoke of him, was owing to her feeling of partial estrangement from the rest of the family.

"Papa will be charmed to see your English cousin. He is so fond of the English," said Antoinette presently. "And I am sure he will come back to receive him, if he can."

"If he can't, do you think it will matter?" said Celia. "If Vincent is obliged to come on Saturday, and he can't come back till Sunday?"

There was something quite oddly helpless in the way she said this—she whose habit always was to decide everything for herself, and certainly never to consult her young step-daughter.

"You know best," said Antoinette, the smile deepening in her eyes. "Nobody will think it matters if you don't, *maman*!"

She sprang up from her low seat, crossed the room to Celia, and, stepping behind her, leaned over and lightly kissed the thick gold braids of her hair.

"I must go and feed the chickens," she said, and she darted out of the room, leaving the Marquise alone with Vincent Percival's letter.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XXIV. "MAY!"

HUGH, after his interview with Mrs. Beresford (wherein that good lady, through sheer nervousness, blundered into a circumstantial confidence of May's engagement, and of Gower's rank, position, etc.), strolled into the garden in the hope of finding May there. But he found only Con, whose thoughts, since their last meeting, had been as busy about this matter as his own.

"Did ye find her there, Misther Hugh?" he asked eagerly, shading his eyes with his hand to peer into Hugh's face for indications of the result of the tête-à-tête.

"Yes," Hugh answered absently, looking about him to find her again.

"It isn't here she is," Con answered, to his look. "An' what did ye think by her, Misther Hugh? Sorra a much changed she is!"

"No; she's not much changed."

"She isn't changed at all—not at all," Con reiterated emphatically, "barrin' she's blossomed; but there's no change in the heart of her."

"No," Hugh replied, still absently.

"Ay, begor! She stan's by her ould frinds; she does so. An' if her prayers could bring you back, it's thim that's done it, Misther Hugh."

As Hugh remained silent, Con resumed presently and pertinaciously his attack.

"For months afther she heeard tell of yere death she had no heart for nothin', an' no one dar' minton yere name fore-ninst her. An' there's that three," he said, pointing to one Hugh had planted in

her garden, "it's been wathered wid her tears; meself has seen it many a time. Ah, thin, Misther Hugh, why in the worruld didn't ye write to say it was alive ye wor?"

"I couldn't, Con; I was in prison."

"But when ye got out of prison?"

"Then I knew that I should be here as soon as a letter."

"There's no telegraphs in thim parts, I reckon?"

"I might have telegraphed, certainly."

"An' whin would she have heard if ye had?"

"About a month ago."

"Oh, murther!" Con sighed, with heart-felt dejection and dismay. And then he added in explanation and almost in apology. "It's thinkin' I was that ye might have helped Masther Fred out of his shcrapc instead of yon shoneen."

"What scrapc?"

"Sorra wan of me knows what shcrapc; but I'll go bail, it was a shcrapc kep' Masther Fred in London, an' that yon Misther Gower got him out of it to curry favour wid Miss May."

"But what makes you think so?"

"Sure she made no more on him nor a dog till Master Fred com' home. Sure I've seen 'em; I've seen 'em together day afther day. An' I've said to her, I've said: 'Ah thin, Miss May, it's yerself that's got yere hands full,' I've said. 'How's that, Con?' she says. 'Wid yere big baby,' I says. 'It's Misther Gower, ye're manin', she says, laughing. 'He's very good-natured,' she says. 'Ay,' I says, 'it's the like of that they says of them woolly pears. They're soft enough, anyway, they says, for sorra a thing else there is to say for 'em.' Wid that she laughed, she did, fit to shplit, an' whin she could

spake for the laughin', she says, 'Deed thin, Con,' she says, 'he's as like a woolly pear as annything I've iver tashted,' she says, 'an' wan on 'em's too much for me,' she says, 'let alone havin' 'em for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and tay,' she says. 'An' whin will ye be shut of him, miss?' I says. 'I don't know whin he's goin', she says, 'but Mither Fred,' she says, 'will be here soon, and thin I'll have a holiday.' An' a nice holiday he gave her, bad luck to him!" Con cried with sudden and startling savageness.

"But you don't know; you've no reason to think it was his doing!" Hugh asked with breathless eagerness.

"Arrah, Mither Hugh, do ye think Miss May's of the sowrt that changes their minds wid their gownds of a mornin'? Sure it was sudden as the crack of a gun afther Maather Fred com' home. 'Twas walkin' the threadmill to walk to the village wid yon Gower wan day, an' the nexht day she takes him for good an' all! Maather Fred has sowld her—that's where it is. He has sowld her like a black, negro, African shlave!" Con cried with uncontrollable wrath. "Sure it's in her face! Her face has just shut up, like them daisies at night, since she tuk him. Sorra a shmile for anny wan or a look for annything. 'I'm in dhread, Miss May,' says I to her the day afther she tuk him, 'I'm in dhread, Miss, that yon rose is goin' off of it,' says I. 'Which rose, Con?' says she. 'Which rose!' says I, 'afther all the worrk ye made to get it!' says I. 'Oh, the Devoniensis,' says she, 'is it dead it is?' 'No, miss,' says I, 'but I'm afear'd it 'ill niver blossom agin; 'like yerself, miss,' thinks I to myself. 'It doesn't mather,' she says wid a sigh that meant 'nothin' mathered now.' But look at here, Mither Hugh; I'll tell ye a quare thing now, an' it's thrue as I'm standin' here—her thoughts, since she tuk him, were always flyin' about you, like a burrd about her neast whin it's being robbed. No mather what we begun talkin' about, afore I knew where I wor, we were sure to get convarsin' of ould times an' Mither Hugh. Isn't that a quare thing now? Wan 'ud a'most think she felt you were comin' back as the seed undher the ground feels the sun is comin' back in shpring. But if she felt that, she'd have waited for ye, in shpite of all the Maather Freds in the worruld; she would so."

"I am glad you didn't forget me," Hugh said inanely enough; but he felt guilty of

something almost like eavesdropping in listening to Con's confidences, though he could not tear himself away from them.

"It isn't that," Con answered impatiently; "in coorse, many's the talk we had over ye. But here's where it is, Mither Hugh: do ye think if she cared a thraneem for yon Mither Gower she'd be afther havin' you in her thoughts every day, an' all day long?"

"Mr. Gower is no favourite of yours, Con."

"It's little that mathers to him—or to me either, if it wasn't on Miss May's account. If ye seen that on the side of a ditch," he said, pointing to a weed, "sorra a much ye'd mind it; but ye'd hate the sight of it chokin' the life out of a rose in a garden."

While Hugh was interpreting this to himself, May appeared. She was seeking solitude in the garden, thinking all the others were in the house.

"Here she is!" cried Con, who affected sudden and rapt industry; but, under his breath, and without looking up he adjured Hugh: "Ax her, Mither Hugh, if it wasn't all Maather Fred's doin'; an' shtand betune her an' him. Do, now, Mither Hugh, Heaven bless you!" he cried with the most fervent and feverish urgency.

With this adjuration in his ears, and in his heart a wild tumult of new hope, Hugh hurried to meet May.

On meeting her he plunged, after his manner, headforemost into the question.

"May!" he cried breathlessly, "was this engagement your brother's doing?"

"Fred's?"

"Yes!"

"Who—who—— How do you mean Fred's doing?"

"You accepted him solely to get Fred out of a scrape?"

"Who told you this?" May stammered in utter confusion and bewilderment, but with a dim, delicious sense of relief in the background of her mind.

Her engagement would be robbed of half its bitterness if Hugh understood its character.

"It is true; I see it in your face; you cannot deny it."

"It was not to get Fred out of a scrape," May answered hesitatively.

"It was payment for it, and nothing else, May, wasn't it? It was; it was. You have confessed it without words."

"But who told you?"

"No matter who told me. It is true,

whoever told me; it ought to have been you, May."

"It was not my secret, Hugh," she said pleadingly, looking up with a yearning wistfulness in her eyes, which expressed a longing for more than forgiveness.

"You have no right to confide it to me?"

"But you know it already."

"No; I know nothing about it. Perhaps I ought not to have led you into admitting it."

"Do you mean you merely guessed it?"

"Con guessed it, or divined it rather. He was absolutely certain of it."

"Con?"

"Yes; and he was certain of more than that, May. He is quite certain that you do not care at all for Mr. Gower."

As May remained silent, bewildered and agitated, Hugh continued:

"You have simply been sold to him by——"

"Indeed, you are wrong; you are wrong altogether. Mr. Gower was too generous to—to do anything of the kind. He was more than generous, and gave up everything to save Fred before this happened."

This was much more intelligible to Hugh than Con's idea, and, indeed, made the whole transaction clear to him. May was the last girl to submit to be bargained away, but the likeliest in the world to be swept off her feet by an act of extraordinary generosity done for Fred.

"And you accepted him only for that reason?"

"You do not know; you cannot understand; I cannot explain," May stammered, in increasing embarrassment.

"Do you mean you are pledged to secrecy?"

"Not pledged, but—— There's Fred to consider: it is his secret."

"I think you have considered Fred enough," he said, with what seemed to May the slightest possible reproachful stress on the "Fred." Hugh had not consciously emphasized the name, nor did he mean at all that he had himself some claim to her consideration; but it was natural that May's sensitive conscience should imagine such a meaning to be in his mind. After a pause of consideration she said, "Hugh, I will tell you all; it is only fair now to tell you, and you will understand; you will see that I am doing right then. Let us go where we shall not be interrupted."

"Let us sit in the summer-house," he

suggested, hardly less agitated himself than she was.

May hardly heard him, or marked whither they went. She was trying to think of two things—how to put the story so as to inculcate Fred as little as possible; and of what the effect of the story so put would be upon Hugh. What would be his advice to her? As the plain unvarnished version of her story appeared to her to be, that Gower had sacrificed to shield Fred for her sake, and for love of her, his father's favour, and all his splendid prospects without a thought of thereby purchasing her hand, it may be imagined how much she made of his magnanimity in the account she gave Hugh of the matter.

This account Hugh had no reason to distrust. He knew nothing of Gower, and he was himself so generous and so much in love with May as to be credulous of generosity inspired by such a motive. He felt besides, that he was constituted judge of his own cause, and that he had need, therefore, to be on his guard against bias upon this side.

"He acted splendidly!" he said, at the close of May's narrative.

"Yes," May replied, not heartily at all. She had begun already to repent of her glowing account of the transaction. There was a silence of some seconds before Hugh ventured to ask:

"You—you do not care for him?"

May glanced up at him with an expression of more than surprise in her face, which, indeed, said as plainly as words: "How can you ask that?"

The truth was, this impartial young person, fearing now a verdict against her, was doing all she could with her eyes to reverse the work of her tongue; and her eyes were infinitely the more eloquent of the two. Having given Hugh a look which told him whom she did care for, she cast down her eyes—blushing scarlet—and said simply, "No."

"May," Hugh said tremulously, "I love you too much. I cannot trust myself to—and you——?" Here he paused in uncontrollable agitation for a minute before he could add: "If I thought, if I could hope, that you cared for me, I could not give you up—I could not."

"I have always cared for you, Hugh," she answered, with childlike directness. "If I had thought I should ever have seen you again, this could not have happened."

It will hardly be wondered at if Mr.

Gower and his magnanimity, and the judicial and impartial frame of mind required for determining what was due to him from May, were here submerged fathoms deep out of sight by a wave of impetuous passion. They lost all thought of others, and all count of time, and gave themselves wholly up to a comparison of the history of their hearts for years past. What they said, and sealed with many kisses, was too fond and trivial for record; but the most passionate poetry in the world could not have conveyed to them a thousandth part of the yearning and rapture this poor prattle expressed. But then the words were lit up by such looks of love as shone through and transfigured them as the sun through the dull drops of the rainbow.

So intent upon each other were they, that the thought of Gower, and of the bar of duty and honour which parted them, lay in the background of their minds, as dim and formless as some great trouble looms in the mind of a man half-asleep, who is conscious only that it lies in wait on his waking for him. So intent, indeed, were they upon each other, that the Vicar stood spell-bound at the door of the summer-house for a moment or two before they observed him. He might well be confounded, for there was May—who but a little more than a week since had engaged herself to another man—with her head resting against Hugh's shoulder, and her eyes looking up into his with the light of ineffable love in them; while Hugh, murmuring delirious words of endearment, was stooping to kiss her.

"May!" cried her father at length, in a tone of such shocked amazement as in a moment recalled both to the falseness of their position, which it was not possible to explain, or even to palliate to the Vicar.

CHAPTER XXV. DISMISSED.

MAY and Hugh started apart like the guilty things surprised that they felt themselves.

They had acted ill even in their own judgement, and with their knowledge of all the extenuating circumstances; how then must their headlong lapse into love-making look to the Vicar in his utter ignorance of these circumstances? And this ignorance there was no dispelling without betraying Fred, at the cost, too, of dealing a cruel, and even a crushing blow to his father and mother.

This was not to be thought of, and was not thought of for a moment either by Hugh or May. They must bear as they could the Vicar's hardest construction of their conduct, without venturing even to hint at a possible explanation or extenuation of it.

Plainly, the Vicar's construction of it was hard. He looked from one to the other with a bewildered and shamefaced expression; for he felt for May all the shame she should, he thought, have felt for herself.

"I—I do not understand," he stammered at length.

"May is not to blame at all. It was an explanation. If I could explain——" Hugh gasped, hardly knowing what he said.

"But you are still engaged to Mr. Gower?" asked the Vicar of May.

He really began to believe that this engagement must have somehow been broken off.

"Yes," she answered, with crimson face and downcast eyes.

The Vicar looked again from one to the other in troubled perplexity, and said then, with a coldness that cut May to the heart:

"Your mother is looking for you."

Then, when May had hurried away, overwhelmed with shame, the Vicar turned to say to Hugh:

"You said you could explain?"

"I don't know that I can; I mean that I lost control over myself," Hugh replied, with all the confusion of guilt.

The Vicar remained silent, so expressing a depth of disapproval which at once mortified and tormented Hugh. How set May—not to say himself—right with her father?

No one hated and scorned a lie, as the coward's skulking refuge, more than he; yet, if he could have thought of a plausible falsehood, he would have had recourse to it to shield May. But none occurred to him.

"She had been telling me of her engagement, and speaking of Mr. Gower in the very highest way, when—when I took advantage of her old affection for me," he said presently, as though this made matters clearer or straighter.

"I cannot understand it," the Vicar said again.

And then the two walked back in moody and miserable silence to the house.

Leaving Hugh in the drawing-room the Vicar sought May, who was in the dining-

room with her mother, and asked her to come with him into the study. May followed him with a kind of feeling that everything had gone suddenly from under her. She worshipped her father and judged everything by his judgement. Her self-respect leant upon his respect for her, and in all doubtful cases of conscience or conduct, she decided according to what she thought would be his decision.

When they had entered the study together, her father said gently: "Sit down, dear. I wanted to speak to you about this—this engagement to Mr. Gower. It surprised me, I confess, as I did not think he was the sort of man you could come to care for; but as you had, or thought that you had, I had nothing to say against it." Here he paused, but as May remained mute, he continued: "If you have mistaken your feeling for him, dear, I think you should at once let him know of it."

As he looked at her interrogatively here, May with her brain in whirl answered helplessly: "Yes, father."

"I think, perhaps, you had better say nothing of the cause of your change of mind—it would seem to him so sudden," the Vicar said hesitatively and shamefacedly. He had no intention of saying an excruciating thing, yet nothing that he could have said would have cut deeper. A week after her acceptance of Mr. Gower, she falls in love with another, and on the very first day of his appearance!

"You are mistaken, father," she said in great agitation.

"Do you mean that you have not changed your mind—that you wish to keep to your engagement?" asked her father more bewildered than ever.

"I have not changed at all," she answered impetuously, desperate and at bay.

As her father here looked at her as though she had gone suddenly out of her mind, she added falteringly: "I cannot explain, father."

The Vicar, having invited confidence in vain by a silence of some seconds, said with a sigh: "Well, dear, I cannot force your confidence. You will do what is right, I'm sure."

Hereupon May rose and went to him, and putting both arms round his neck and pressing her cheek against his, attempted to speak, but broke down utterly. Her father, hardly less moved, having tried in vain to calm her, suggested that she should lie down for a little.

After May had left him he sat for some time thinking it all over, with the result that he rose suddenly and hurried away in search of Fred, whom he found in his own room.

"Fred, did May accept Mr. Gower of her own free will?" he asked sharply.

Fred was startled; but feeling that if he did not front the situation boldly all was lost, he asked at once, and aggressively:

"How do you mean?"

"I mean, had you anything to do with forcing her to accept him?"

"Certainly not," Fred answered doggedly and defiantly.

"I thought perhaps you had."

"Has she said anything to make you think so?"

"No, of course not; but it just occurred to me as possible."

"Thank you," Fred retorted with almost savage surliness.

"I am sorry for having suspected and suggested it; but I did not know how otherwise to account for her engagement."

As Fred remained sulkily irresponsible and silent, his father quitted the room without another word.

For some time after his father's departure, Fred gave himself up to furious thoughts of May's treacherous ill-usage of him in particular, and of all his gross grievances against the world in general. Now Fred, for weeks, had had recourse to tippling for the relief of his depression, with the result of so deepening it, that he was chronically in a kind of such ferocious despair as that of "a wild bull in a net." Everything and everyone were in a conspiracy together for his destruction, and he was in the mood to run amuck against the world in general, and especially against May, Hugh, Gower, and his father. As for May, her conduct was monstrous towards Gower and himself, and shameless towards Hugh.

In this matter of May's engagement, the accounts had got so muddled in Fred's mind that he now really believed, in the bottom of his heart, that May was more in his debt than he in hers. Had he not secured her one of the best matches in England? And Gower, who, at least in her idea, is magnanimity itself, she proposes to jilt a few days after her engagement to him for the first man who appeared, and on the first day of his appearance! Then she turns informer against him, Fred. She takes care to suggest to her father that her engagement was his doing, and, though

she had not as yet explained how it was his doing, this disclosure was now inevitable and imminent. Anything more atrociously treacherous he never heard of! For, in Fred's view, May's jilting of Gower, though sufficiently abominable, was nothing to her ill-usage of himself.

In this mood Fred took a resolution, not as sudden as it seemed, to revenge himself on the world generally, but particularly on his ungrateful family, by emigrating forthwith. This mode of cutting the Gordian knot of all his difficulties had become familiar to his thoughts of late; and it needed only the impulse now given by the belief that he could thereby at once defeat and punish May's treachery to decide him. For Fred felt, like Coriolanus, that his people would be punished most by his expatriation.

It was, therefore, with a feeling that he was taking the first step of revenge upon May, for which he thirsted, that Fred proceeded forthwith to pack. He would start that night for Liverpool, without a word of farewell, and thus contrive that May's punishment should follow upon the very heels of her offence. He pictured to himself, with savage delight, the consternation and desolation with which his flight would overwhelm May, especially when her conscience would accuse her of it. Indeed, in his half-tipsy ferocity, he scarcely saw beyond his revenge. America or Australia—whichever he should elect to go to—and the new life he would begin there, were dwarfed behind the idea, as hills in the distance are dwarfed behind a mound in the foreground. Wherefore, it was with the haste of fury that he set about his packing.

Half-an-hour later, however, while he was yet in the midst of it, May knocked at the door.

"Yes?"

"It's I; may I come in?"

Fred strode to the door with the intention of locking it, but before he reached it he changed his mind. It would be a great relief to him to pour out upon her the vials of his wrath, while he felt secure of her keeping secret his intended flight. Accordingly he bid her gruffly to enter, and immediately upon her entrance he attacked her furiously.

It was some time before May could make out the immediate occasion of the onslaught; but at last, something he said, suggested to her that her father had been cross-questioning him about her engagement.

"Father! But what did he say?" she

asked, with a meekness which ought to have disarmed Fred.

"He said that I had forced you into this engagement," replied Fred fiercely.

May was confounded. Could her father, after his unsatisfactory interview with herself, have put Hugh to the question, and learned so much of the truth from him? She felt so guilty before Fred for having confided in Hugh, that this idea struck her dumb.

Fred, reading guilt in her silence and in her face, cried furiously:

"You may now do your worst; I shall soon be out of your power."

"Are you going away?" May asked, in a tone of timid distress and dismay, for the packing in progress interpreted the threat to her.

Fred proceeded with his packing without vouchsafing an answer.

"Fred, are you?" she repeated beseechingly.

As Fred, still disregarding her, continued only to pack away furiously, she ventured to put her hand on his arm.

"Fred!" she cried, with a pathetic appeal in her tone.

He shook off her arm roughly.

"Do you think I shall ever again tell you anything? Here! Go!" he cried, striding to the door, which he opened. "Go!" he cried again, with a fierceness that frightened her into hurrying from the room.

At the door she turned to make one last appeal, but she got no farther than: "Fred!" when he banged the door savagely in her face, bolted and locked it.

May, certain now that Fred meant to quit home for ever, was at her wit's end as to how to ward off this blow from her mother—to say nothing of her father and herself.

What could she do?

She could think of nothing, and there was no one but Hugh to advise with, as only he knew all the circumstances of the case. She felt a kind of reflected shame in seeking another tête-à-tête with him, even for this purpose; for what would her father think of her if he came upon them again together?

Nevertheless, the case was too urgent for her to stand upon this scruple. She must see Hugh at once, alone. She hurried downstairs to seek him, and found him alone with her mother.

"Hugh," she said breathlessly, "would you mind coming to see Miss Hick with me?"

"Miss Hick!" exclaimed her mother.

"Yes; you would like to see her, wouldn't you?" May urged, with a meaning and appealing look; "and it would be such a kindness to her."

"I should like to see her of all things," he answered eagerly.

"I shall be ready in a moment," May said, hurrying upstairs for her hat.

May was back in a few moments, evidently in a feverish haste to be gone. She feared to meet her father, and in order to escape being seen by him from the window of the study—if he should be there—she hurried Hugh through the side-door and into the garden—a long round.

Hardly, as it happened, had they reached the garden, when the Vicar heard of their intended visit from his aggrieved wife.

"They have not gone yet!" asked the Vicar eagerly, for he had heard no one cross the hall to the front door.

"Yes, they've just gone through the garden, though they seemed in such a hurry," Mrs. Beresford answered querulously.

The Vicar seized his hat and hurried out of the front door to intercept them. He was angry, for the first time in his life, with May, and yet more angry with Hugh. Were they lost to all sense of honour, or even of shame, to creep out in this stealthy way to renew their treacherous love-making? It was treacherous not to Mr. Gower only, but to him, after his remonstrance with them, and their expressions of guilt and regret. He did well to be angry.

Meeting them at the gate which led from the garden into the road, he said abruptly to Hugh:

"Could I speak to you alone for a few minutes?"

Of May he took no notice at all.

"Certainly," Hugh stammered. "We were only going to call on Miss Hick."

"This was not the direct way," rejoined the Vicar, with a curtness which cut May, and indeed Hugh also, to the quick.

Both looked such pictures of guilt and distress, that the Vicar had no doubt now at all of their treachery. Nothing but his own eyes would have convinced him of it, but this witness he had unmistakably before him. They turned back together to the house in leaden and despairing silence; and, on reaching it, while May made her way to her room instinctively, and as though walking mechanically in a nightmare.

Hugh was ushered by the Vicar into the study.

Having closed the door behind them, the Vicar turned at once upon Hugh.

"It was not to see Miss Hick you took May out," he said, with angry directness, for he understood that the proposal of this visit had come from Hugh. Hugh could not, of course, set him right at May's expense, even if that would have mended matters much. But it would not, and there was nothing, therefore, to be urged by Hugh in explanation, or even in extenuation of the offence. He was not ready at invention, and had to remain guiltily dumb. Wherefore the Vicar resumed, with yet more heat: "You know she is engaged of her own free will to Mr. Gower; and you yourself admitted an hour ago that it was not honourable to behave as you did to an engaged girl; and yet you steal out stealthily again to repeat this behaviour!"

"I had no intention of repeating it, sir, I assure you."

"For what then did you steal out with her by a back way? To see Miss Hick? I cannot trust you, or her—or her," he repeated almost with a cry; for, indeed, May's deceitfulness cut him to the very soul.

"You are quite mistaken," Hugh began eagerly, only to be vehemently interrupted.

"Mistaken! Mistaken in what? In thinking that this visit to Miss Hick was a pretence? What else was it?" As Hugh, the unready, remained silent and confused, the Vicar continued: "No, I cannot trust you. It's no use to ask you to promise not to see her alone again while you stay——"

"Do you mean that I should break my word?" asked Hugh, with hardly less warmth. "I had better go then."

As the Vicar gave the assent of silence, Hugh, at once enraged and wretched, turned sharply to the door, which he opened only to close it again, and to hold out his hand to the Vicar.

"Good-bye, sir, you'll come to be sorry that you have so misjudged me."

The Vicar shook the hand offered him without one word, and turned away to hide an emotion which mastered and unmanned him.

To understand his manner to Hugh it must be remembered that he was thinking all the time of May. Her supposed deceitfulness sickened him to the soul, and his outburst of anger to Hugh was such relief to his wretchedness as a wounded creature gets in gnawing the spear wherewith it has been transfixed.

Hugh, being hot-tempered, and having had, it will be allowed, much provocation, hurried away to find Mrs. Beresford, whose bewilderment at his sudden departure he made no attempt to clear up.

"I have to go," he said. "Pray tell May that I had to go at once, but that I shall write to her."

"But what—why—have you had bad news?" asked Mrs. Beresford breathlessly.

Hugh, however, was gone. He hurried to the station, whence he sent a porter to the Vicarage for his portmanteau. Up to the last moment before the train's departure he hoped that the Vicar, or perhaps even May, would come to bid him at least a kindly farewell; but no one appeared except Fred. On Fred's appearance, Hugh was reminded of what May had had time to say to him about her brother before the Vicar interrupted so roughly the tête-à-tête.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH EXTENSION.

WHEN the approach of Summer sets people longing for the country, it is possible to gratify the desire without going very far afield. The first warm day of Spring, when the buds are visibly expanding, and Nature is putting on a delicate wash of the purest green, when birds are singing in the woods, and the lambs are skipping, and the kye routing in the fields, is most enjoyable no doubt in the country; but then, one must live in the country to secure its enjoyment.

The moment comes, and is gone, its charms too fleeting and evanescent to be seized except by those who are on the lookout for it, or whom chance may throw in its way. But Spring blossoms, too, in an unmistakeable way, even in London streets. Every little forecourt has something to show for the coming season; people are at work with trowels and forks, or perhaps with old table-knives, in their front gardens; and the costermongers' barrows are loaded with the most vivid and lovely blooms.

The hansom cabman adorns his vehicle with primroses, and the omnibus conductor has a bunch of violets in his button-hole. The suburban stations, too, are gay with beds of hyacinths and daffodils; the rails glitter brightly in the rays of the sun; and distant roofs reflect the sparkling beams.

And if we still have a longing for the

country, for pastures and green fields in lieu of the ever-present Piccadilly, what four-horse coaches may we not find, all ready to start from the White Horse Cellar, and glittering with the brightest of varnish, and the most satin-coated of horses?

But, for the purpose of to-day, a tram-car will suffice; it is a green tram-car, too, which looks encouraging and Spring-like; a car which started from somewhere about Clerkenwell, and which we may pick up anywhere along the Kentish Town Road. The tram-car reaches the end of its journey at a neat-looking roadside tavern, called the Duke of St. Albans. Beyond, the road rises steeply towards Highgate, a road thickly set with gardens, villas, and handsome houses, and with its raised causeway bordered by posts and rails, having an air of old-fashioned dignity and retirement.

At no great distance up the rise a shaded road opens out to the left, which a wooden finger-post of the good old pattern announces, or rather points out, as Millfield Lane. The lane winds round among villas and walled gardens, like any other suburban road, till you come upon an opening with green fields beyond, and the glitter of water, in a chain of pools, which stretch up the valley till they are lost to sight in the recesses of a hanging wood which stretches across the head of the ravine. Here was Millfield Farm, no doubt, about which certain dim memories seem to hang, and, if the farm-house has undergone a change into something more ornate and dignified, there is still something like a farm-yard to be crossed, with a farm-gate now wide open, and a board that mildly adjures the passer-by not to enter "except on business." The exception is such a wide one, and the general aspect of the place is so unaggressive, with no big dog to bark or bite, and no horned animals to charge or toss one, that there seems no harm in taking a short cut through the gateway, and between two of the ponds, past a barn, and past a huge haystack that diffuses an agreeable scent of old hay, and so upon the open down beyond, which stretches away, on either hand, with a bold lift towards the sky, showing a freedom of outline and strength of contour that suggest some region wild and remote, far remote from the busy haunts of men.

A solitary figure, outlined against the sky, standing upon the highest point of the green headland, might represent for us the scout of an ancient British tribe, who watches the approach of hordes of relentless foes

upon the last stronghold of his race. On the side of the hill the young barbarians are at play; but, on nearer acquaintance, they resolve themselves into a party of the children of the period, with nurse-maids, and governesses, and all the accessories of civilisation, who are romping about in the sunshine, and pulling the "gowans fine."

Yes, actually, there are gowans, for a gowan may be anything in the way of a wild flower, if it be bright and yellow; and these are bright and yellow enough, regular stars of brightness among the green turf, although perhaps botanically they may rank only as dandelions.

It is a breather to the top of the ridge, and then to the bluff summit where the hill slopes abruptly to the meadows beneath. These meadows are the Gospel Oak Fields—recalling some old oaks once famous, where, perhaps, a knot of Puritans in sad-coloured garments and steeple-crowned hats, may have gathered in days of persecution, to hear the Word from some preacher. Lines of new houses press closely upon the green fields, and beyond lies a wilderness of roofs, with towers and spires rising here and there under a thin veil of white smoke, mixed with patches of still white steam, that closes in upon the scene till all is lost in a vaporous haze that mingles with the clouds in the horizon. The sun, breaking through the clouds, shines here and there upon roof and spire, and gives glowing touches to the soft, white veil of vapour. Far to the eastward the misty veil is thinner, and distant hills gleam softly on the horizon—the hills of Kent—beyond the broad river that winds, invisible to us, through the plain below.

It is noon, and from out of the busy hive of men, bells may be heard to ring faintly; Highgate tells the hour to Hampstead, and Hampstead tolls it back again; while chimes softly tinkle in the air, coming from one knows not where, but with a pleasant village sound with a leisurely sweetness, that suggests hedges and green fields untainted by city smoke. Down below is the busy work-a-day world in all the toil and turmoil of its daily existence; but on the hill behind us, larks are soaring and warbling, and the hum of insects overpowers all sounds of the distant city. And yet we are still within the parish of St. Pancras; the parish of workshops, of railway stations, of miles of streets and shops. If the wind were in the right quarter we

might hear the great bell of Bow, and, indeed, it was on that opposite height of Highgate, surely, that Dick Whittington heard that world-famous chime, "Turn again, Whittington." On this very hill are now two or three of Dick's representatives, pale city lads—on the sick list, perhaps, or out of work—who are sitting, basking in the sunshine. The figure of our ancient Briton turns out to be a respectable artisan from King's Cross.

"Yes. I come up from the smother down yonder," he says, with a nod in the direction of the thickest part of the smoke, "and I feel the better for this mouthful of fresh air." The poor fellow has just come out of hospital, after an operation, about which he seems pleased to talk, and he is not good for much as yet, only just to crawl about, and try to get a bit of strength. And the green fields are pleasant, and the "filage" beautiful. That word "filage" seems to hang rather to the French "feuillage" than to our English "foliage," which last, by the way, is a word not in much demand in colloquial English. Perhaps the "filage" is a legacy from the Spitalfield weavers, or later emigrants from France. Of foliage, indeed, there is not very much to be seen as yet. But the trees no longer look bare, every twig is thickening with buds, and in a distant view the softness of Spring is spread over all the trees in a rich luminous haze.

For we have turned our backs on the city now, and another view is spread before us; the crescent-shaped ridge that bounds the scene, with Highgate, white and shining, among its groves and gardens, and its church spire rising from the trees; and on the other horn of the crescent, Hampstead, with its rough heath and fuzzy down, and its pleasant red-brick houses and tiled roofs. And there below Highgate is the string of silvery pools, and Caenwood, with its tall feathery trees and its air of ancient distinction. But why Caenwood? And if it comes to that, why Parliament Hill? for as everybody knows, this which forms the base of our survey is and has been Parliament Hill, and the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. As to this latter title there are sundry theories. Some aver that a kind of Parliamentary Council was held here during the Civil Wars. There was certainly a fight on these hills shortly after the Restoration, when some of the more fanatic of the old Parliamentary soldiers raised an insurrection against the

new order of things. One Venner was their leader, and they took the field against the Monarchy, thoroughly believing that supernatural agencies would be at work to help them. The train-bands of London came out against these fanatics, whose doctrines of a new spiritual Commonwealth, and a free sharing of worldly goods, were even more obnoxious to citizens than to courtiers; and after an engagement of a doubtful result among these open fields, the Fifth Monarchy men, as they were called, retreated to Kenwood, and, failing any support from angelic hosts, presently dispersed. It was Kenwood then, for "Caen" seems to be a more recent innovation due to the polished Chesterfield, who had the place for a time.

But all this does not help us much to an explanation of the title, Parliament Hill. For there was nothing Parliamentary about the Fifth Monarchy men, who, indeed, regarded Parliaments as so much filthy rags. Another explanation is at hand. It may have been, that this secluded hollow was once the seat of an original British Parliament, in the days when Parliamentary costume was composed of the skins of wild beasts, and the Speaker's wig was rudimentarily present, in the form of an additional streak of blue woad about the cheeks. But who could have translated the old British Council into the Norman French Parliament (!) and after all it is upon the ordinary and coarse material, rather than the historical and dignified, that popular nomenclature generally rests. Was there ever a fair upon the hill? or a settlement of booths, whose occupiers sold "Parliament," which thirty or forty years ago was the name of a kind of gingerbread, widely known and appreciated by the youngsters of the period?

But this last suggestion seems too degrading to be seriously entertained. For the very outline and contour of the hill suggests some high and ancient history. It is the contour of a virgin hill, as it is untouched by the plough; a hill of ancient fame, where stirring deeds may have been done, of which no memory now remains. Stay, if there is no memory, there is at least a memorial. Some way along the ridge rise the relics of an ancient barrow; where a few dark wind-bound fir trees have taken root in the ancient soil. Briton and Roman, Saxon and Dane, have fought foot by foot for the crest of these hills. Old Watling Street passed this way, first as

a British trackway through the wilds of an almost impenetrable forest; then as a Roman road, cleared, levelled and paved, a great highway between flourishing, populous cities. Once more the forest resumed its sway, and saplings grew to mighty trees among the relics of a lost civilisation; wolves prowled about the skirts of the hill; and the wild bull pawed the turf where now pale Londoners sit and watch the smoke cloud that encompasses their homes. When the wild beasts of the forest disappeared, outlaws and robbers still remained; and these were succeeded by the highwaymen of later days, who from this point of vantage might watch the approach of wayfarers to be plundered, or of armed parties to be avoided. Gibbets, too, marked the progress of civilisation, and ghastly objects swinging to and fro in the wind, were at once a terror to travellers, and a warning to evil-doers.

There is another name for the hill, Traitors' Hill, and a vague tradition exists that from here some of the conspirators of the Gunpowder Plot were on the watch by night and by day, at once hoping and dreading to see the flame of an awful explosion, which should carry Kings, Lords, and Commons in fragments towards the sky. But whether these were the traitors, or earlier or later conspirators, rebels, patriots, whatever they may have been, there is no definite evidence to show.

Reminiscences of a more definite character may now be invoked. We may go back to the time of the Gordon Riots, when Lord Mansfield had his country house at Caenwood. The judge who gave slavery its quietus in England, and whose support of the claims of Catholics to their rights as citizens, had drawn upon him the hatred of the No Popery mob. The judge's town mansion had been burnt by the rioters, and the cry then arose "To Hampstead!" to complete the work of destruction by putting the house at Caenwood to the flames. A wild and truculent mob marched out from London; they reached the heights at Hampstead, and were in full sight of their object when they came upon the wayside inn, which then as now, bore the title of "The Spaniards." Mine host of "The Spaniards," worthy Giles Thomas, did not lose his head in the emergency. He harangued the mob, applauded their purpose, and shouted "Down with the Papists!" till he was hoarse. And in proof of his sympathy,

he would have them all stop and drink at his expense. But in the meantime he had despatched a messenger to London for assistance, and had warned the inmates of the house of their danger. All the drink in the cellars of the tavern was brought out, and the servants at Caenwood also rolled casks of ale into the road. The heads of the barrels were knocked in, and a wild orgie began, in which, for a time, the purpose of the march was forgotten. But with intoxication came renewed courage and enthusiasm, and the cry was raised "To Kenhouse!" while the rioters began to pull down walls and palings, and advanced in a disorderly, threatening mass.

The messenger despatched from "The Spaniards" had speeded well on his errand, and a troop of Horse Guards had been sent at a gallop to make head against the mob. The troops came by the route we have just traversed along the way to Highgate, and then through Millfield Lane, and so into Caenwood itself, where the mob were just swarming in. The sight of the horse-soldiers, with their gleaming sabres, cooled the ardour of the ringleaders; and the Dutch courage of the mob speedily deserted them, and left them a prey to wild panic, which sent the whole assembly flying down Hampstead Hill and over the Heath towards London.

Relics of the Gordon Riots are, it is said, still preserved at Caen House, in the form of the charred and blackened remains of Lord Mansfield's library, burnt when his lordship's elegant mansion in Bloomsbury was destroyed by the mob. The books were law-books, mostly, no doubt, and not much to be regretted, for there is nothing more useless and less interesting than a law-book out of date, while its heavy calf-binding gives it a species of immortality which it is far from deserving.

Other more suitable memories for this open, breezy place may attach to the literary men and artists of former days who have loved and frequented these hills. A favourite walk with S. T. Coleridge, when he lived at Highgate, was through this same Millfield Lane, and over those hills towards Hampstead. Sometimes he would meet a pale, fragile-looking young man, not very well dressed, who was John Keats. Leigh Hunt would take his constitutional over here from his cottage in the Vale of Heath. And as for artists, there are few among the past generation

of London artists who have not resorted more or less to these health-giving hills.

It is pleasant to learn that in all probability these hills are to be preserved as free and open spaces for ever, and that they will remain as the favourite resort of the inhabitants of the crowded regions below, on all high days and holidays, as well as affording all London a famous point of view—a fine breezy headland, overlooking the great ocean of London life. To come here in the early summer, at the break of day, before the breakfast fires are lighted on innumerable hearths, when the whole valley of the Thames from Deptford to Chelsea lies open to view, with Saint Paul's and all its attendant churches; the Abbey, and the towers of Westminster, gilded by the rising sun; with the great public buildings; with the forest of masts in the docks, and in the reaches of the river. To see all this, with the hills rising beyond would be an experience far more memorable than the sight of a number of mountain peaks, such as people crowd to the top of the Righi to get a view of. Even if the wider prospect is veiled in mist, there is the nearer view of the semi-circle of heights, with hanging woods, and shady dells, and glittering pools.

The highest summit of Parliament Hill seems to be about on a level with the highest part of Hampstead Heath, where there is a break in the line of trees and houses, and the tall flagstaff rises against the open sky. There is a free, unembarrassed walk right across, with a hedge or a ditch here and there, and bird and rabbit fanciers from Saint Giles's may be seen at work digging up with their knives the dandelion plants, and other herbs, which their live stock delight in. The way is rough, but pleasant; here are relics of a brick-field; and there rises a high bank of red sand, pierced here and there by rabbit burrows. A good many pedestrians are scattered about, their dogs scampering and barking over the breezy common. Looking back, a modern brick viaduct, with no apparent purpose about it, crosses one of those narrow bournes, or ravines, which furrow the hills so plentifully hereabouts. The viaduct is, in its way, a monument of a great building scheme, which some thirty years ago threatened to abolish Hampstead Heath altogether, and put an enormous fortune—estimated at some four millions—into the pocket of the lord of the manor. Perhaps, if Hamp-

stead had not been the favourite retreat of lawyers, famous judges, distinguished counsel, and eminent solicitors, the lord of the manor would have had his way; the thing had often been done before in other quarters. But Hampstead fought well for its Heath, and the public opinion on the matter was strong, and supported by the universal voice of the press; and in the end the manorial rights were purchased by the Board of Works, for forty thousand pounds; not an insignificant price for what cost its original owners little more than the proverbial old shoe, but a considerable rebate upon the inflated estimate mentioned above.

One or two curious points in the history of the manor may here be inserted. Originally it belonged to the Abbot of Westminster, and, on the suppression of the convent, it formed part of the endowment of the new Bishopric of Westminster, which, being soon suppressed in its turn, one Wroth got a grant of it, whose descendant sold it to Baptist Hickey—the universal Hickey, so he might be termed, for, wherever you may dive into local history, the long-headed City mercer, who afterwards became Lord Campden, and gave his name to Hickey's Hall, a name still opprobrious to thieves and vagabonds, wherever you may dive, there, sooner or later you will come upon Baptist Hickey. From the noble descendant of Hickey, the manor was purchased by Sir William Langhorne, a wealthy East India merchant. Sir William's great friend and favourite was a certain Dr. Warren, a clergyman, to whom he gave the livings of Charlton and Hampstead, and whose daughter he married after the death of his first wife.

The story goes that Dr. Warren, entering Sir William's study one morning, was informed by the latter that he was making his will.

"Ha!" cried the Doctor, much interested, "and pray what have you done for us?"

Said the Knight complacently,

"Oh, I have made you thirteenth in remainder for these manors."

"Is that all?" cried the Doctor in disgust. "Sir, I would not thank you for it."

And upon that, Sir William, a little vexed, struck his pen through the clause in the draft. Curiously enough, by a strange series of casualties the manors went to the fourteenth tenant in tail, a distant cousin of the entailor, one Mrs. Maryon.

And thus it might have been Dr. Warren's, had that worthy divine known how to keep his temper. A certain unluckiness as to direct transmission seemed still to characterise the estate, and the son of Widow Maryon having no heirs of his own, bequeathed it to a grand-niece, who married General Sir Thomas Spencer Wilson, and the joint names of Maryon Wilson will be remembered as those of the usurping lord of the manor who tried to turn the Heath into building ground, and Pictolus into his own pockets.

And thus it happens that Hampstead is still to be recognised in its main features, although there are many changes and alterations about the old village. The footpath across the Heath leads directly to Well-walk, which some years ago was a rural lane, and where Keats's favourite seat was still pointed out. It is still a pleasant shady place with an old garden wall butting upon it, which must have been there for a couple of centuries. But tall houses on each side have destroyed the chief charm of the place, and there is nothing left of the old Well-house, which once was the resort of a goodly company, and thought almost as genteel as Tunbridge Wells. Nor shall we find any trace of Sion Chapel near the Wells, once a great marrying place, where it was announced that a chaplain was constantly in attendance, and where people might be married free if they kept their wedding dinners at the gardens. Nor is there anything to be seen of the Long Room where balls and concerts were held; nor of the trap-ball ground adjoining, where in a print of the period, a number of ladies and gentlemen in garments of the revolutionary age, may be seen at this elegant pastime.

To chase the rolling circle's speed,
Or urge the flying ball.

The literature of trap-ball by the way is sadly scanty. And yet till well in the present century the game held the place which croquet occupied later on, and which is now taken by lawn-tennis; a game, that is, in which both sexes may join, and which favours that pleasing intercourse known as flirtation.

And with the Wells have also disappeared the Flasks—the Upper and Lower Flasks, with their appropriate walks. The Upper Flask having been the once favourite tavern, where wits and men of fashion resorted in the summer, and where a rural session of the Kitcat Club was established. The Flask, too, was Richardson's house;

here he established the unhappy Clarissa, when pursued by the over-ardent Lovelace. The name remains as the sign of a tavern; but the old house disappeared long ago.

But the favoured houses of a later generation of "littérateurs and viveurs" still remain. There is Jack Straw's Castle as flourishing as ever, and The Spaniards in its shady nook. But these houses recall memories which are almost too recent to be freely handled.

On the Heath, below the Castle, the peculiar name of which has never been satisfactorily accounted for, is still to be made out the scene of John Sadler's singular suicide; and there is always the noble view of hill and dale, with Harrow on its hill, and Hendon, and a country that looks forest-like still, with water shining here and there, and the white steam of passing trains curling over the landscape.

THE PLEASURES OF A SMALL INCOME.

MUCH has been said and written about the drawbacks, pains, and penalties attaching to a small income; but no one has seen the necessity to call attention to the fact that the judicious administration of a limited yearly amount contains, in itself, a good many of the elements of pleasure.

Certainly, there is no danger of satiety in the amount of indulgence in luxurious pleasure; but that is a good at the outset.

I have studied the subject from various points of view: from history, from observation, from experience (best of the three) I have seen "better days," have undergone losses which have made an appreciable difference in private expenditure; have had to forego things which in former years were necessities, but which would now, if indulged in, be luxuries. I have had to deny myself the pleasure of travelling, of going to places of amusement, of indulging the love of buying pretty things, of giving kindly gifts. I have had to look thoughtfully, wistfully, at a sixpence twice before spending it, and have parted from it with a pathetic regret, as from a dear and valued friend; and yet I cannot say that I have become demoralised thereby, nor that I have found less pleasure in life than I had before. Nay, I sometimes think my poverty has but added a keener zest to existence.

True, I have had more care, more anxiety, more actual hard bodily and

mental work; the future—and how to meet it has sometimes been an ugly nightmare in my waking hours, more especially when feeling "out of gear," "below par," "played out," or whatever may be the present fashionable term for feeling at variance with oneself and with the world; the present—and how to fulfil its daily demands for food and raiment, for rent and taxes, how to stop the thousand little leaks whereby shillings and pence flow drop by drop from a scantily-filled purse, has taxed every energy I possess. How to be just before I am generous—the latter so much more easy, more pleasing to self, more recognised by the world outside—has sometimes proved an irksome duty.

Hours have been spent over accounts where only minutes were before, in the vain hope of being here able to reduce, there to pare away a trifle; old garments have been renovated, old furniture upholstered, old books read, old songs sung.

Hard lines, at first glance, all this seems to be, after knowing no former stint. And yet was there not a subtle pride in wearing the robe transformed by one's own skill; was there not a double sense of proprietorship in its possession? And does not the chair or sofa assume an added interest as being one's own handicraft, and the means of developing a talent for invention lying latent and undiscovered?

To be clever enough, out of the scanty store, and without any sensible diminution or alteration of daily fare, to save a small sum against the inevitable rainy day; to produce proudly, unexpectedly, and amidst the undisguised delight of the household, enough for a summer outing or an evening at some place of amusement; to be able to buy some dainty work of art to embellish the dingy room; to purchase a flower or delicacy for a friend's sick-room, help to make some red-letter hours in the prosaic depressing labour of making two short ends meet.

There are certainly the contrary lights to the picture, which, in a dispassionate view of the circumstances, must also be considered. The quelling of generous impulses, in degree, if not in kind; the being obliged to do, or seem to do, little mean, unaccustomed things, the sinking down ever so little in the opinion of one's small immediate world, even though we know the opinion is not worth much; the constant necessity of thinking of money and money's worth—always a sordid and unelevating business: the stern denial

given to one's tastes and wishes for fair surroundings, and expansion in art, and literature, and travel; the pinch that poverty, especially "genteel poverty," gives to the mind as well as the body: these are some of the drawbacks which the owner of the small purse experiences most keenly.

And yet, by comparison with those who have but to say the word, and their very wishes are complied with, those to whom obsequious shopkeepers bow, whose tables are covered with delicacies, who can command pleasure and all its accessories at their will, to whom the graceful amenities of life come easily and almost unasked, I maintain that in comparison with these the man with the small purse gets more real, natural, fresh, unalloyed delight out of his rare, long-awaited-for pleasure, of whatever kind it may happen to be, than does the other.

For the mere enforced self-denial has been a good precursor of the coming joy; the anticipation—more often in life preferable to the reality—has only prepared him—as a "*hors d'œuvre*" to the palate of a gourmet—for the full enjoyment of his particular entertainment. The participation of his pleasure with his appreciative family, who have all shared the former burden, make a delightful emotion unknown to, and hardly to be understood by the man who has everything he wishes without any effort of will or person.

The mere planning and forecasting of the infrequent pleasure is in itself a delightful exercise; the getting the utmost value for one's money, irksome in most cases, is full of interest in this. I recall, at this moment, a delightful six weeks abroad which we, a party of three, enjoyed on a certain sum saved from household expenses, and which had been planned before almost to the spending of every shilling. Had it merely been intimated to us that we were to start on the morrow—go where we would, spend what we liked—the trip would have been shorn of half its charm. We talked of it for weeks before, we consulted guide books, friends, routes, got the names of hotels, the prices and tariffs of different places, and came back not exceeding the sum we had originally agreed to spend, having had a most enjoyable time, and bringing back with us some pretty reminiscences of our travels, beyond the inexhaustible treasures of memory and retrospection. How deliciously excited and happy we showed beside some "*blasé*" travellers, who "did" every place, and

everything, and had neither interest, nor delight, nor satisfaction in anything, and who exhibited no emotion whatever but a thorough contempt for the countries through which they were passing, and the people they encountered. They had far better have stayed at home, for all the good their tour did them, unless to point a moral to others.

Another great pleasure people of small means have over the rich, is in the giving and receiving of presents. The selection of a gift bestowed by a person of limited purse is always an occasion demanding more time and trouble than it is to the millionaire who walks into a shop, and, regardless of the relative value of articles, orders whatever takes his fancy to be sent to his house. In the case of the other, the value, the use, the lastingness, the suitability to the recipient, are all discussed and weighed, and add to the pleasure of both giver and receiver. It is the small things in life which count the most and weigh the heaviest, and a pretty gift which costs the sender some self-denial in the giving, some thought in the choosing, or some trouble in the making, is worth more than a present which costs in money ten times as much.

The person of limited income, trammelled though he may be in the constant, earnest care to keep free of debt, is not weighted with the heavy responsibilities which a man of large means, a landed proprietor, or merchant, or manufacturer who employs labour, if he be at the same time a thoughtful and conscientious man, must always feel.

I do not despise wealth; I think money is a great sweetener and smoother out of the difficulties of life; but great wealth brings its own special cares.

Seneca says: "A great fortune is a great slavery." How to spend freely, judiciously, and not to squander; how to resist thousands of false and begging appeals, and yet be truly charitable; how to raise those around and give them their fair proportion of the "goods the gods have provided" for him; how best to lay out his acres, how to advance the interests and best to influence the character of those dependent on him; how to be a faithful steward of much wealth, is a difficult, dangerous, and not too pleasant task.

I have known rich men who enjoyed their wealth, whose hearts were large as their purses; who did kindly deeds in out-of-the-way places and manners; who gave

felicitous gifts, which is itself an innate gift, with lavish hand; who were humble, gentle patrons of art and literature; whose gold could not corrupt them, nor tarnish their sweet and simple natures.

Others I have known who have lain awake—tossing for want of that rest no fortune can buy—wondering where and how they could invest their quickly-gotten money, so as to bring in the highest returns; who lost their health in the mad race for wealth, and hoarded their gold to its detriment and to their own destruction.

Another pleasure of the comparatively poor I must not omit, but which I must confess belongs more to the feminine portion of the necessarily economical household, and that is the delightful pastime of bargain-hunting. "Cheap Sales," "Great Reductions," "Job Lots," "Bankrupt Stocks," "Sale of Manufacturers' Stocks," words most alluring to a woman's ear, and especially to the woman of small income; most unfortunate that it should be so, for these are the very places she should most avoid—and doesn't.

This part of my subject is not drawn from observation, but from bitter experience.

I know what it is to con the fascinating pamphlets those worldly-wise schemers sew broadcast at certain seasons of the year, setting forth in tempting figures their enticing bargains. They have well gauged the female mind. I have walked miles, and paid cab and train fares to save a penny a yard, on what I could have got equally well in the next street.

If only that had been all; but once inside those Halls of Temptation, I have allowed my eager eyes to wander on forbidden ground; the serpent has held out a dainty bait, and whispered:

"This or that is so cheap; pity to let the occasion slip; if not fit for present use, it is sure to be useful by-and-by."

And though a haunting consciousness of folly and wrong-doing half marred the pleasure, I walked open-eyed straight into the trap, and spent my hardly-earned money on something which is still lying in a drawer, and which has never been of any sort of use at all.

And yet so keen is the pleasure of looking over the tempting wares, so delightful the mere act of purchasing them, that filled as I am with regret and remorse at my folly in the past, I know that I am ready on the morrow to succumb again to the same temptation.

They say it is the first step in the right direction to cry "Peccavi." This, at least, I have done; and let me lay to heart in the future that "the time for reasoning is before we have approached near enough to the forbidden fruit to look at it and admire."

Finally, a small income induces some very worthy virtues, and helps to destroy some grave errors.

It inculcates prudence and forethought, and economy, of which Cicero said: "Economy is of itself a great revenue"; it induces self-denial, self-reliance, and habits of regularity.

It also teaches, though in a slow and somewhat painful school, patience and contentment, except in some exceptional natures where the constant, watchful grinding narrows the sympathies and deadens all the emotions except self-pity. It develops possibilities for good, and calls into prompt action powers of nature undreamt of before, and binds the members of a family more closely together in the bonds of a common and sacred labour.

Be this as it may, it is a grand thing to believe that it is possible to be happy, though we toil to win the happiness, and reach it but on rare occasions, which, being few and far between, have the more likelihood to be of the nature of the angels whose visits they resemble.

IN RHINELAND.

CHAUCER has told how, when "April showers have pierced the drought of March, folks long to go on pilgrimages and seek strange strands." Thus, some years ago, while sojourning at Bonn, two German friends, inspired, no doubt, by the mystic solar influence of the season, proposed to me to go a pilgrimage with them to the Mount of Olives—not the sacred hill of Jerusalem, but one of its many namesakes, the highest and most distant of the Seven Mountains so called, those hills which stand like sentinels on guard before the entrance of that Paradise, the upper Rhine valley.

More than a month later than Chaucer's pilgrims, in the last week of May, we three determined on this yet shorter pilgrimage than Chaucer's jaunt to Canterbury. In more reverent mood than Mark Twain's "Pilgrims Abroad," though not to worship at shrine of cardinal or saint, we went but to sacrifice a night's rest upon the altar of the great sun-god—in short,

to see the sun rise upon the glad season of Whitsuntide, from the summit of the Mount of Olives.

I know not why Rhineland folks climb the hill on Whit-Saturday rather than another day. Let who will seek an indication of pre-historic solar worship in the fact, we, hearing of no contemplated torchlight merry-making on the part of the students of the University such as are sometimes organised, concluded we might possibly have the Seven Mountains to ourselves, for our sole enjoyment, on one of the first warm, moonlit nights of the year.

Accordingly, charmed with the thought of three hours' tramp through the woods at night, my mind filled with solar myths, mediæval goblins, and wood sprites, I met my friends upon the Rhine wharf on Whitsuntide eve 188—. It was light as day in the beams of the full moon, the ripples of the river sparkled, and the villages on the other shore showed with sharp, dark outlines and silvery surfaces against the cloudless sky. On our right, up stream, lay the Seven Mountains, the familiar outline borrowing a new beauty from the abrupt shadows and ghostly shimmer of the moonlight.

The broad embankment was dotted with groups of people awaiting, like ourselves, the advent of the Cologne boat; others came from beneath the pitchy shadow of the avenue of pollard limes that borders the river.

The Minster bells chimed midnight, other churches followed suit, and all was still again when the steamer hove in sight. A phantom boat it seemed as it glided past the willow fringe at the mouth of the Siege on the opposite shore. Black and silent it approached, unearthly in the moonlight, with the great, white awnings of the upper decks shining like the spread wings of some huge aquatic bird, until a puffing of engines and shrieking of whistles, for a moment terrific, broke the spell.

The groups about the wharf gathered at the gate, and, amid pushes and exclamations in broad Bonn dialect, the people scattered down the rattling planked jetty and on board. Following, we found ourselves alone upon the upper deck; below, we heard the authors of the pushing and exclaiming. They seemed to be a holiday party of apprentices and journeymen, and a choral society to boot, for they began to sing.

As we glided along the water the

pathetic German songs, trolled forth in merry voices, sounded pleasantly enough. It was an odd mixture of beer and sentiment, broken by bursts of merriment over a companion who, having seemingly surpassed the others in his numbers of "seidl" of ale, now proved a laggard in the matters of crochets and quavers. Their joyful "Juvivallera! Juvivallera!" struck echoes from the wooded slopes of the Petersberg as we lost sight of the last light from Bonn's palatial villas, and entered into the shadow of the Seven Mountains — that vast portal through which Father Rhine forces his way, to flow henceforth placidly over flat country for many a long league down to his sand-choked outlet into the gray North Sea. The Drachenfels, the dragon-haunted, castle-crowned rock of old, reared its dark "silhouette" against the sky, and the jovial apprentices lapsed into silence, as, with volumes of steam and sound, we "made" Königswinter. A light gleamed here and there from the white houses of the little town nestling on its narrow ledge between the river and the vine-decked hills that yield the red Dragon's-blood — Dragon-blood shed by the gallant Siegfried when, in olden days, he freed the country from the monstrous dragon that dwelt in the cave on the other side of the rock. The cave is still to be seen; the blood of the dragon oozes yearly from the soil in sweet purple drops, through the vine branches, and Siegfried is sung, by poet and musician, throughout the length and breadth of the land, from Bonn to Baireuth. Who shall say that nature, or human nature, is ungrateful?

A large party left the boat with us, our apprentices; and, to judge by their talk, some folks from Cologne. We discussed the probability of their being on the same errand as ourselves. A scarcely pleasant prospect. Certainly we did not grudge these joyous, city toilers their share of the glories of their native hills; but their bibulous mirth and satyric antics were not desirable accompaniments to our woodland devotions. We left them clamouring in an inn-yard; and, passing up the narrow street, where voice and footsteps echoed as in a cavern, we climbed the winding path between the bare poles and closely pruned vines over the lower slopes of the Drachenfels. At the cross-roads we halted, to take our first look backwards over the roofs of the sleeping townlet, the shining river, and the wide

plain beyond ; we turned to the dark hills before us and were startled by shouts and flames on the path we had come. In a moment the wild crew of 'prentices, torch in hand, were upon us. We stood aside, and helter-skelter they rushed, laughing and shouting, past us into the darkness, like a masque, a vision of the night, and silence closed round us again. Adown the slope into the "Valley of Nightingales," a narrow path hedged in with trees and brushwood, somewhat damp under foot, and dark as the open on a cloudy, moonless night, in single file we walked in silence through the blackness, feeling rather than seeing our way. This seemed a part of our pilgrimage, of which we might boast as a merit to have gone through ; but in a moment the valley's name was justified, and a burst of melody filled our ears, on the alert for cracking branches, or spongy hiss of boggy ground beneath our feet. There must have been five or six sisters, Philomelæ, they answered each other slowly, then with a chorus of joyous trills. What a glorious, sad song it is, the swelling shake, a wealth of harmony, an abundance of sounds to which one listens breathless, afraid to lose a single vibration, straining to retain the swift, fleeting music that dies into a quiver of doubt ; then the questioning notes, clear, sweet, and the long, sad pipe, almost a wail, which, as it dies away, leaves a thrill of pleasure, half pain, an excess of joy in the ears of the listener !

Our path led upward again. The moon greeted us between the sparse branches, and soon we had reached a point of vantage whence we looked upon the tree tops of the nightingales' sacred grove, and around us, again, were the soft outlines of the wooded hills, varying at every step we took. Sentimental pilgrims as we were, ever gazing around us, we stumbled more than once over the great stones placed alternately on either side of the broad road, to save it from undue wear by heavy quarry carts. Far below us, on a lower path, gleamed the torches of our uncongenial fellow-pilgrims, and the glees and madrigals of the holiday 'prentices floated pleasantly to our ears. We regretted our impotent movements of impatience—it was easy to be humane at that distance ; and, looking down and around on the vast panorama of undulating green as we crossed the Hirschberg, the will-o'-the-wisp flames and snatches of music sorted well with the deep shadows and silvery illuminated hill-sides. We

were back in the "Once upon a time," and below were a troop of goblins visiting their hidden treasures in the hollow hills, or was it the jolly Abbot of Heisterback, belated on his way from a neighbouring priory ?

Up and down, over the two mounts, Rosenau, Great and Small, past the little stone shrine with its iron-barred recess, 'twixt brushwood, scrub, and glades of oak, skirting the black depths of a spinney of pines, past the little Margaritenhof, the farm that is the one spot of life in the green waste by day, lonely enough for the home of a fairy-tale heroine or the Seven Dwarfs themselves—on for many a mile until, as the moon sank behind the western horizon, we ascended the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

It was too dark to see the hills we had traversed ; through the woods, up the steep stony path that leads to the summit, we climbed, and emerging from the wood, found ourselves on a small, bare, rocky plateau. A wooden shanty, dignified by the name of "Restauration," occupied a third of the space. An eyesore by day, this was a welcome refuge to weary pilgrims by night ; but, alas ! for our nineteenth-century nerves, the result, as Mr. Taine remarks, of three centuries of culture, we preferred the penetrating mist of dawn to the foul smoke and loud talk of our fellow-pilgrims, all a good century behind us in fastidiousness.

The beauty of the night was gone ; all around was wrapt in a thick gray fog. The moonlit hills were henceforth as a dream ; we were on a raft in mid-ocean ; the air cold and paling, in such wise that the darkness seemed to steal away, rather than the light to grow stronger. It was the dull moments between the acts. Nature was scene-shifting ; Queen Luna had retired amid enthusiastic plaudits. Now we doubted whether King Sol would eclipse her, and we waited his coming with more indifference than was predicated by our long pilgrimage for his sake.

Somewhat subdued by the air of dawn, the merry 'prentices and their companions turned out of the shanty and established themselves in an arbour, where benches were arranged east of the little building. We hastened into the warm room they had left, and placed ourselves at the tiny window, facing east.

Drowsy with unwonted fatigue, we waited. An exclamation roused me to look out. A white light had dawned in the east, it spread over half the sky, and

then gradually over the whole. Around our mountain-top, surged a white sea of mist, soft, snowy, impenetrable cloud which rolled and swelled continuously as though uneasily conscious of the conqueror's approach.

Lighter it grew; yellowrays shot up in the east, tingeing the fleecy-white clouds that hung in the pale blue vault; the blue grew deeper; a rosy veil spread upward over the yellow cloudlets; the boundaries of the universe seemed to widen as we gazed into the ever intensifying azure of the western hemisphere; flushes of red, purple, and gold, swept over half the glorious hollow globe; faint reflections of its glory touched here and there the stirring cloud garment of the world at our feet.

The next moment we were dazzled by the hero of the day himself; fierce and golden the sun leapt up, rapidly surmounting the bank of cloud on the horizon. Below the cloud garment, agitated by the golden sword rays of the conqueror, rolled fold by fold away, and melted into dew, slowly revealing the green world beneath. One after the other we watched the glad hills welcome their sun-god—the Petersberg, the Hirschberg, the Sturmberg, the beautiful Dragon-rock, the square-topped, quarry-broken Wolkenburg, the mighty Löwenburg, and all the little hills between, stood green and fresh after their vapour bath; each moment fresh valleys were opened to us, and our eyes dived delighted into nooks of verdure. I do not know whether the sun-rise differs on this day from another, but we forgot our fatigue and the dust of travel in this dew-bathed glory of morning.

Truth is beauty, and ugliness is truth; therefore beauty is ugliness, say the realists; but ugliness is only half truth. Seeking wood-nymphs, we may chance upon a satyr, but be sure a nymph is hard by. Such a satyr was to thrust himself at intervals upon our sylvan joys. Sounds of quarrelling, in terms more forcible than choice, broke upon our ears. Our fellow-pilgrims had not wasted many moments upon the splendour of earth and sky, and their beer-drinking in the arbour was now interrupted by a disagreement between a young married couple of the Cologne party, jealousy the cause. Their friends made remarks, more or less soothing or inflammatory, in the broad Cologne dialect. The uproar became general; after vain attempts at personal violence, the injured wife

relapsed into tears, and a Cologne waltz struck up the then popular melody, "Das ist die liebe, etc"—and this is love! Oh, dearest Felix! all our love again is nought.

With a roar of good-natured laughter, the party, assisted by our Bonn glee-singers, joined in the chorus; the unhappy couple were forced into each other's arms. Mollied by music and laughter, they embraced, and were soon drinking together, and clinking glasses all round the table. Inclined to be disgusted at the incident, we joined in the laugh when the chorus of "This is love" so appropriately arrested the flow of angry passions. The vulgar interruption ended most humanly, and, as a true comedy, with tears and laughter. It was the last we had to endure. The actors in the masque of night and comedy of the morning departed, and we were alone on the Mount of Olives.

Warm was the sunlight, fresh and sweet was the air, as we stood gazing westward over the fertile undulations and broad valleys of Westphalia. The river Siege, winding Rhinewards, lay like a silver thread in the landscape; for miles away every tree was distinct in the clear atmosphere. Over the Seven Mountains wreaths of white mist were rising from deep vales; beyond lay the mighty Rhine and that Netherland, which farther north gives a name to country and people. Pink and gold had faded from the clear blue sky. The morning was awake. Men and animals were stirring in the Margarithenhof; a cow-bell tinkled; thrushes and blackbirds piped in the wood as we descended from the Mount of Olives. How short a time it was since we had stumbled up this path in the dark! In an hour we had seen what seemed like half the world, a transfigured image of the whole.

Who shall tell the delights of our tramp over hill and vale that "incense-breathing morn!" We gathered lilies-of-the-valley in sheltered nooks; tarried on the heights to view fresh landscapes; listened to the birds in the groves; and finally arrived on the Drachenfels at six o'clock in the morning to breakfast.

Every one who has journeyed up the Rhine knows the Drachenfels. There, too, is the inevitable "Restauration." But, conscious of its incongruity, the roomy Swiss cottage hides itself modestly behind trees, on a ledge below the ruin. Hungry as we were, we did not cavil, as casual visitors are apt to do at this cockney

desecration of a spot devoted to memory of mediæval robber-barons, and mythical princes, but enjoyed our breakfast, looking from the broad verandah upon the

Wide and winding Rhine,
Whose lordly bosom nobly swells
Between the banks that bear the vine.

We called over each familiar object in the wide landscape beyond; the castled mound of Godesberg; the tapering spire of Bonn Minster; the monster towers of Cologne thirty miles away; mere clouds on the horizon; the low line of hills, last outlying spurs of the Eifel; the red-roofed villages of the plain. Each beauty seemed a new one; the magic of the Rhineland cast new spells over us. Well may the poet warn his countrymen against the fatal river. Dwell upon its banks a few short years, and you are homesick for it for the rest of your life. The love of it rests in your heart; the longing to re-visit it recurs at intervals.

An early boat carried us to Bonn, where we landed, lily-laden, on the wharf. Church bells, and folks in holiday attire, reminded us that it was Whit-Sunday, as, way-worn and travel-stained, as pilgrims may be, we hastened through the chestnut avenues of the Hofgarten to our respective homes.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART II.

CHAPTER III. THE ENGLISH COUSIN.

THE train from Paris steamed slowly into the station at Saint Bernard, past the cemetery with its many crosses, under old garden walls, up to the platform, now shaded with laburnum and pink may. The sun was getting low, and one of the may-trees made a natural bower full of rosy light, where three people were talking together, apart from the Saturday crowd of caps and blouses. The sky was cloudless, and the air dazzlingly clear, and fresh, without a touch of coldness. Coming down from the glaring heat and noise of Paris into this pure, quiet country, was like stepping into Paradise.

Captain Percival, rather cross, and wearied with his long day's journey, was looking out of the window. He thought that after all he was perhaps doing some-

thing rather too kind and good-natured, in travelling all this distance to see a person who had certainly treated his family, and especially himself, with great coldness and ingratitude. In fact, it was curiosity which brought him down into these French wilds; curiosity as to the sort of life which his cousin had made out for herself, mixed with a certain love of interference, and a vast capacity for being bored at Woolsborough, which had made him feel that he must have a few days in Paris by way of relaxation. And once in Paris, it was natural to think of Celia, and to wonder what change the four years had made in her, and, in short, generously to offer his friendship to the cold, worldly woman who had declined anything better. As he travelled down from Paris that day, he was at first rather pleased with what he was doing; but the journey was tiresome; there was a bustling change into a slow, cross-country train, which bored him; he hated the French and their "administration," and was inclined to quarrel with every official he came across; he began to wonder how he would be received; he sneered inwardly at French titles, after the fashion of an ignorant Englishman; he read Celia's note again, and thought it cold; he wondered if she would keep her promise of sending to meet him; in short, he prepared himself to be injured, offended, and slighted in every possible way.

In this frame of mind he looked out to see if the little station happened to be Saint Bernard, and had no need to listen to the voices of the porters, for there he saw his cousin Celia standing under the may-tree, talking to an ugly little man and a handsome woman, herself beautifully dressed, and much handsomer, he instantly thought, than in the days when he made love to her at Woolsborough, now so long ago.

In another moment she saw him, and said a farewell word to her companions, parting from them with bows and smiles. The little man, who had been standing bare-headed talking to her, put his hat on again, and he and the lady hurried towards the train. Madame de Montmirail came straight to the carriage from which Vincent was getting out, with smiles and outstretched hands. He certainly could not complain of her welcome.

"I am so very glad to see you," she said, in the voice every peculiar tone of which he remembered so well. "It is so kind of you to come."

Vincent did not exactly know whether he was pleased with her manner, though, in theory, of course, it was perfection. It showed plainly that the past was not to be remembered, and, therefore, that there could not possibly be any awkwardness in their intercourse now. It was very dignified and quite natural. Vincent could only put on his best manners, and answer this stately young Marquise in the way she seemed to expect.

Her large open carriage was waiting outside the station, and the horses were shaking their bells impatiently. Soon they were off, and then Madame de Montmirail began very amiably to make apologies for her husband.

"Achille is so sorry," she said. "He is kept at Tours on business till to-morrow afternoon. He told me to explain to you. Till to-morrow I hope you will be able to endure life with me and Antoinette."

"I think so, thank you," said Vincent.

"Not that there will be much to amuse you afterwards, I am afraid," she went on. "This is such a very bad time of year, you know; all our neighbours are in Paris. You should have come in September, when we are really gay, and when you could have gone out shooting."

"Thanks," said Vincent; "but after all, I came to see you, and French sport is, perhaps—well, an acquired taste!"

"Like English society," said Celia, laughing a little. "In the country at least, and in cathedral towns. Poor dear old Woolsborough! How dull it used to be! And tell me, how is everybody? When did you leave Aunt Flo and Uncle Tom? Are they quite well?"

"The Canon is flourishing," said Vincent. "Not so sure about my mother; she looks a little worn. She is four years older, you know, and it shows. Not that that is always the case—at least, the years are kind to some people, and give them what they take away from others."

"Thanks; that is very pretty. You will do very well in France," said Celia, looking at him and smiling.

As she met his rather melancholy eyes, some strong memory of days gone by came suddenly over her; she became grave and silent, and looked the other way. They drove on quickly, along the straight road with its border of poplars, now all a soft, shimmering green, with lovely grey and blue shadows, standing tall and motionless against the clear depth of evening sky. The intense stillness, the sweetness of the

air, with its just perceptible breath of wood-smoke and fir-trees, the sunset glory that was growing deeper, flaming up before it died, in a last attempt to delay the victory of that soft, grey twilight which was already lurking in shady places, in deep lanes, in low meadows under trees:—all this, the natural magic of a summer evening in Anjou, was now at its height, and could not fail of its effect on people with so much to remember, though they might be among the least romantic of their kind.

Vincent watched his companion with a sort of wonder. In his heart he had never really understood her proceedings, for he had never really believed in the coldness and hardness of which he had accused her. In spite of everything she chose to say, he had been honestly convinced that she cared for him, when he went away to India. Of course she never cared for Paul Romaine: that he knew, and he was right there. But her cold answer to his mad letter from India had really surprised him, showing that he had very blindly misunderstood Celia; and after this her giving herself away, fortune and all, to a Frenchman, seemed to show that his cousin Celia, the bright girl who had made Woolsborough so pleasant that summer, had never really existed. Why had she married this Frenchman? Was it possible that she cared for him? There were a dozen questions to be asked about it, but no satisfactory answer could possibly be had. Paying her a visit in her foreign home was the likeliest way of making discoveries, and the first of these seemed to be that she was contented.

'And why are not you in Paris, like everybody else?' asked Vincent, suddenly breaking the silence.

"Well—I don't know—we are economising a little," she answered. "We have spent a great deal on the house, as you will see, and there is plenty more to do still. And my husband is 'maire' of our village, and takes an immense interest in all the local politics. He is one of the very few men of his kind whom the people really love, you know. I dare say, as time goes on, he will do a great deal more in politics, in a more public way. All the Legitimists think so very much of him."

"And is it all new, his interest in these things? All since you married him?"

"Before that, things were different, you see," answered Celia, coolly. "He

hardly lived here; the place was half in ruins. He lived about anywhere—with his mother-in-law in Paris, a good deal."

"Who were those people at the station?"

Celia smiled, and hesitated a moment before she answered. The smile came from a little amused wonder, a recognition of old times come back again. This certainly was Vincent, unchanged, abrupt, absolutely ill-mannered as ever.

"The Baron and Baronne de Cernay," she said. "They have a fine old château at Saint Bernard. They are very old friends of Achilles's."

"Friends of yours too?"

"We don't quite love each other. Oh, very civil, of course. But they are patriotic, and don't understand Achilles's weakness for the English."

"Isn't it altogether an unfriendly sort of business, living here? You can't be really intimate with any one."

"As to that," said Celia, "many of the people are charming, and like me very much. Intimate—I don't care about that, you know. I never did—it is not my disposition."

The sun had set, though the world was still glowing; but in the deep shaded lanes by the little river in the valley, through which they were now driving, it was already twilight. But Celia's fair face seemed to shine clear against the dimness, as she looked at Vincent with smiling eyes.

"You are as mysterious as ever," he said.

"No, I am not at all mysterious. You told me my character long ago—and I suppose I am consistent."

"I don't believe it. I can't make you out," Vincent muttered, half to himself.

"Don't bother yourself by trying. One thing you must think—that I am very unkind and odious, for I have never said a word about all the fine things you did in India—or asked about your wound. Is it quite well now?"

"Yes, thank you. I left off my sling before I landed in England, six weeks ago. Who told you anything about my doings in India?"

"Aunt Flo's letters were full of them, of course."

"Well, it's a long history. I can't begin it now. I want to look about at your pretty country. Really, it is a very characteristic sort of country."

"I never saw anything like it, before I came here. Do you notice how much yellow broom there is everywhere? In the

wilder bits, and the woods, it is quite lovely—and we have such beautiful hedges, all very tall, and full of wild roses and honeysuckle. I shall take you out walking, Vincent. Dear me, poor thing, how bored you will be!"

"If I am, I shall go back to Paris. It's true, I haven't your sublime power of enjoying everything. Hallo! what's that?"

They had reached the top of the hill, and were turning down to the village. Vincent's exclamation was caused by his first sight of the great white tower of the château, rising there among dark woods, bathed itself in the whole glory of evening light, with all its windows shining.

A flash of real pride and pleasure crossed Celia's smiling face.

"That is La Tour Blanche," she said.

"Don't you think that it was worth restoring?"

As they drove down into the valley, and along the village street, they passed a number of caravans and small carts drawn up beside the road. The "Corbeau Blanc" seemed to be stirring, and full of business: a great noise of hammering made the horses prance and dash round the corner to the bridge; groups of strange people were standing about; the eyes that stared at the carriage were ruder and less friendly than usual. Only here and there a passing villager took off his hat to Madame la Marquise, and Vincent smiled at the marked way in which she returned these bows.

"To-morrow is the fête of our village," she explained to him; "that is why you see all these people."

"And do you go to mass at the church here?"

Celia flushed a little: perhaps she thought the question was meant to remind her of Woolsborough and the Cathedral.

"I have no doubt you blame me, Vincent," she said deliberately; "but for my part, I never could see much difference between one form of Christianity and another."

"Won't you have to confess that remark?"

"Nonsense. Of course, I think now that this is right; at any rate, I am quite sure it is right for me. It adds to the separation. I'm sorry; but that is other people's fault, not mine. I don't wish that it should, nor does Achilles. But he would not be half so happy if I did not agree with him; so I think my choice was right."

"No doubt it was," said Vincent. "You did quite the most reasonable thing. What does the separation matter to you? You have got a very pretty avenue here, madame."

"Yes, it is lovely now," she said, evidently glad to escape from the religious question.

Three minutes later they were standing on the terrace in front of the stately old house, where Antoinette had brought the dogs out to receive them. Vincent was formally introduced to Mademoiselle de Montmirail, who curtsied, and gave him her finger-tips gracefully. She was prepared to admire the soldier cousin, but found this impossible; in her opinion and that of Suzanne, who was not far off, his appearance was hideous; fierce, rude, wicked, and altogether disagreeable. How such a man could be a friend of her charming stepmother, was indeed mysterious; and this mystery never became clear to Antoinette.

The old dog who was lying beside her got up and went forward to sniff at Vincent, then turned away with the slightest growl. Another dog, very like this one, pricked his ears and slunk away towards the house; only the little terrier, Rataplan, was ready to make friends with him.

"Why, where did you get these Clumbers?" asked Vincent, looking with interest at the other dogs. "Are they the fashion in France? One so seldom sees them now."

"Don't you remember them in Surrey?" said Celis. "Here, Di!"

And the old dog crept slowly forward to be stroked by her, avoiding Vincent as far as possible.

"Surrey? Of course. Colonel Ward had a whole pack of them."

"These are two that he gave me, poor dear! I don't care for them very much. I want to get a poodle. But old Di is a privileged person, and it is supposed that a poodle would make her unhappy."

"She won't live much longer," said Vincent consolingly; and then he added, with his slight grin which did duty for a smile, "I remember kicking one of these Clumbers once, when Colonel Ward wasn't looking. I rather think it was Di, and that she remembers it too."

"Quel homme, mon Dieu! quelle horreur!" thought Mademoiselle de Montmirail as she went out of that calm golden evening into the lighted house, with her stepmother and the English cousin.

CHAPTER IV. A PILGRIM IN TOURNAI.

THAT most mysterious and magical of palaces, the Château de Chenonceaux—the home once of Diane de Poitiers, and afterwards of Catherine de Medici, who took it away from her, and who, though she died at Blois, seems to have left her spirit here—stands white and grey and smiling, crowned with gilded vanes and ornaments that glitter in the sun, and looks at itself for ever in its native waters of the Cher. For it has grown up out of the river, this great stately building, four hundred years old; the river flows and splashes gently about the solid foundations, strong as rocks, and under the low, heavy arches of the long bridge-gallery, which continues the château right across the river to the farther bank. Diane de Poitiers built that bridge; and the Queen, when she possessed herself of Chenonceaux, thought of finishing off the building with another stately pavilion beyond it; but she died without carrying out this idea.

The avenue, leading somewhat down-hill from the village, pauses in a courtly manner at some distance from the front of the château, which faces it, in all the rich and magnificent beauty, without extravagance, of the best Renaissance time. Two great stone sphinxes, looking wonderfully scornful, guard the entrance of the avenue; then the château is approached across an immense court of glowing yellow gravel; on one side, in the distance, are a long range of modern stables; on the other, a great stiff garden, full of roses, lying in the broad sunshine without a tree, with stone walls and flights of steps, extending to a terrace, which runs along by the river. And the broad, shallow river glides along, with a green island here and there, and the masses of trees on the farther bank make a green, restful background to the shining château and its "cour d'honneur."

No doubt there are times in the year when Chenonceaux is gay and noisy enough, and then perhaps it loses its weirdness, while all the display of a present modern world comes to invade the atmosphere of Catherine, her works and ways. But one would rather see the place when it is silent and lonely, when floating on its river it seems like a dream, a vision of old time, magical, sinful, strange, with a fascination all its own, and an evil, enchanting beauty. There is an undercurrent of musical laughter, with a little

sweet mockery, in the only sound that reaches one's ears, the ripple and splash of the river against the old stones. "I am very old, very wicked, and very beautiful," Chenonceaux seems to say. "Here in the lonely country, close to my quiet village, hidden by my trees, I have had a history to startle the daylight of your modern minds. Diane, Catherine—beauty and witchcraft—I shall bear their stamp for ever. And the Revolution spared me, while hundreds of old Christian houses were burning, and the blood of their owners was flowing on the scaffold."

An English traveller, one Saturday afternoon in May, was leaning idly on the parapet wall by the river, gazing at Chenonceaux, and listening to some enchanting talk of this kind. He found himself rather a rare bird in those parts. He had been in the West, then in the East, and had met other English travellers everywhere. In Spain, his last hunting-ground, they were not so many; and here they seemed to have totally disappeared. He had come up from Bordeaux to Tours, and had found himself attracted by a part of the world quite new to him, and which yet, somehow, had associations: he had now lingered a fortnight in this Touraine country, visiting Blois, the stately château and charming, friendly old town; Chambord, mourning alone in her forest; Amboise, high and sunny, a smiling ruin bright with flowers; Chaumont, quaint and grand, with round towers looking down over the broad Loire; and now at last he had come to Chenonceaux, certainly the most curious and beautiful of all, though the ancient royalty had departed from her more utterly than from any of the others.

The French came to see these old châteaux; they were to be met with everywhere: prettily-dressed ladies; large "bourgeois" families carrying bunches of wild flowers; priests conducting a flock of boys; but there were no English to be met in this part of France; and the lonely traveller rejoiced, though he wondered. It pleased him that these good French people, whom he liked in spite of all their vagaries, and who liked him, should take such a lively interest in their own history, haunting the royal houses that half the world had forgotten, and listening in a meek excursionist spirit to everything they were told.

This traveller had now been several years away from England, and during his absence he had not thought much of his

own country, or of the few interests he had left behind him there. Among new scenes, and ways, and people, he had to a certain extent forgotten the past. He had gone away with a wounded spirit and a sore heart, having been changed rather suddenly from a romantic boy into a disappointed man; and the news, which had reached him just as he was leaving England, that the woman he loved was likely to marry a man he had almost called his friend, had not improved his opinion of human nature. Everything seemed to be against him: he had lost his only real old friend, and so he determined to shake the dust of it all off his feet, and to stay away from England for at least ten years.

He went to America, which strengthened him, though he hated it; and then to Australia, which he hated more; and then to the East, which he loved, for he found there a miraculous power of soothing, an indifference to all the ills of life, which he was only too glad to learn. And now, with the half-Oriental look of an Englishman who loves the East, with a quietness which was perfectly strong and self-dependent, with a thin, sunburnt face, a dark beard, only his slight active figure unchanged, Paul Romaine was coming slowly home, month by month finding himself a little nearer England.

After all, it was only four years since he went away; but to him they seemed "years of years"; and, as he leaned there on the parapet of Chenonceaux, he was thinking that there was really no reason why he should not be back at Red Towers in a week. Yet there was no hurry; more things to see in this country, no doubt; and as to Paris, he was determined to pass through without stopping. Of all the cities he had seen in his life, he hated Paris most.

Then he fell to thinking what old friends he should find in England, when he got back there. Well, at Red Towers, except the Vicar, there was no one. He wondered, half smiling, whether he could make anything of the Vicar. The old servants might, perhaps, be glad to see him; Scamp, if he were alive still; the only other person likely to take an interest in him was Dr. Graves, who had thought him a terrible fool for flying off as he did. The Percivals? No, he felt now that he could not trust Mrs. Percival; she must have known all along, to some extent, that Celia was deceiving him. And perhaps now the Canon was a Bishop—"just the

sort of man," Paul thought wickedly—and the Palace doors would open gingerly to a savage like himself.

Paul wondered, in a lazy, philosophic way, whether there were many people with so few friends. In the course of his travels he had, of course, met with several people who had taken a fancy to him, and for the time had conquered his unsociable tendencies; but none of these acquaintances had had time to grow into friendship. Besides, he had lost his old idealising power, or, at least, it seemed so; he did not quite believe that any one could like him. The goodness of human nature had become something of a dream to him; he had a sad way, now, of enquiring into people's motives. This Celia had taught him.

He was quite conscious now of being in Celia's country; not far, perhaps, from her home. He remembered the name of the château—La Tour Blanche. It had struck him by its odd likeness to the name of his own house; but he did not remember, if he had ever heard, what town it was near, or in which direction he was likely to come upon it. There was no danger, at any rate, as long as he was in Touraine. M. de Montmirail had certainly told him that Anjou was his province.

Danger? Yes; he certainly would rather not meet Celia again, though, after all, if such a thing happened, it would not matter much to him. What nonsense it all was! People were always having these troubles and getting over them, and meeting their old loves again quite agreeably, not exactly as strangers or as friends. Looking calmly back, it was all very absurd: one had made oneself so miserable about nothing. Why should a pretty, worthless woman be able to throw a shadow over one's whole life? But even as Paul thought these wise thoughts, he told himself that there never was, and never would be, a woman half so attractive as Celia. Paul was a person of fancies, and it seemed to him that there was some likeness, some odd connection between Chenonceaux and

his old love. Beautiful, smiling, cold, with something at once attractive and repellent. Yes, Chenonceaux was the sort of house that ought to have belonged to Celia.

After a long time, Paul was startled from his dream by human footsteps not far off. He looked round, and would not have been surprised if Celia herself had come walking towards him across the glowing gravel. But it was only a peasant woman in her blue gown and white cap, carrying a basket. She was enough to rouse the traveller, however, and to remind him that time was flying. He stood upright, taking a long, last look at the picture before him; the great white walls, white turrets, peaked grey roofs, and flashing vanes; the broad river, as it ran slowly, and danced, and sparkled in the sun; it all smiled enchantingly, yet with a sweet indifference, as Celia used to smile. Paul turned away from it, crossed the garden, and went out into the court, and then on up the avenue into the village, hardly looking back.

"Le Bon Laboureur" welcomed him, and he lingered there a little, buying a quantity of photographs and bits of Blois faïence, half wishing to stay all night at the pretty little inn, among all its gay French art and pink geraniums. But as there was nothing to do but to go back to the château and dream over it again, he thought he might as well go back to Tours. Even then he nearly missed his train, for he walked down the open country road to the station, and stopped to pick some rare wild flowers in a field by the road-side.

Sunburnt and dusty, he sprang into the train just as it was starting, and by those few minutes of hurry he overtook his life, and finished his years of independent wandering. For the "divinity that shapes our ends," so shaped his, that he was brought face to face with Celia's husband.

When Paul looked up, the Marquis de Montmirail was sitting opposite to him, smiling kindly, though a little flushed and confused by the sudden recognition.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XXVI. "I PROMISE"

HUGH was too much preoccupied to notice Fred's state as he came upon the platform. That young gentleman, having drunk himself by this into the quarrelsome stage of intoxication, had just had a quarrel with his cabman, which made him unapproachable at the moment by anyone, least of all by Hugh.

Hugh hurried towards him as he stood scowling surlily after the porter who was wheeling his luggage away to be labelled.

"Are you going by this train?" Hugh asked hurriedly.

Fred turned to freeze him by a look.

"Yes," he answered shortly.

"Going for good?" Hugh enquired anxiously, forgetting that he thereby intimated to Fred May's having confided this to him.

"What's that to you?" Fred cried furiously.

"Your sister——"

"And what's my sister to you? Don't you know that she's engaged to a better man than you?"

Hugh, perceiving now his state, turned sharply on his heel and walked away down the platform. But Fred followed unsteadily.

"Look here, I want to speak to you," he cried in a tone of exasperating insolence. "Don't you know that it is dishonourable, I say dishonourable, to dog my sister——"

As Fred spoke louder and louder till some intending passengers and a porter or two stopped to listen, Hugh turned here upon him with sudden and savage fierce-

ness. Fred, who was at his very heels, staggered back expecting a blow; and, before he could recover himself, he fell off the platform between the rails. There were three sharp whistles, and mingled shouts and shrieks of horror. The incoming train was just upon him. Hugh, without the loss of a second, leaped down upon the rails, seized Fred round the waist, and had all but dragged him clear, when the engine was upon them both. The off cylinder—it was a side-cylinder engine—struck Hugh on the head, and knocked him senseless into the six-foot, and the engine's front wheel went over Fred's left foot, crushing it horribly. As the engine was almost at a stand when it came upon them, Hugh was not killed, and only one wheel passed over Fred's foot.

Almost before Fred had been lifted on to the platform, the news of the accident had somehow travelled through the village, and the local doctor was on the spot to attend to him. A Leeds surgeon, who happened to be in the train, attended to Hugh; and, hearing that he was a stranger, thought it best to take him on a few miles further to Leeds, where he would have the best attention and advice in all the North of England.

Hardly had the train started, carrying off Hugh in charge of Dr. Allport, when the Vicar arrived at the station, hurried thither by half-a-dozen breathless bearers of ill news. People, too kindly to crush a fly, find a pleasure in crushing a heart or household with ill news, merely because its possession gives them a momentary sense of self-importance and of power. Hence it is that the least important and the feeblest folk in a village are those to whom the carriage of ill news gives the keenest delight. Good news, also, they will carry with pleasure.

but not with equal pleasure, because its less striking effects upon the recipient flatter less their sense of self-importance and power.

Hence the pleasure the Vicar's informants took in telling him the shocking news; for there was not one of them who would not have made a serious sacrifice to have spared him this blow. But it was only human nature for them to run to the Vicarage with the news, which was made more piquant by the disaster being by all supposed to be the result of a blow inflicted in a quarrel. This was the account of the matter given unanimously, not only to the Vicar, but to May and her mother.

"It wor all along o' thee, Miss May," said one of the women gossips to the girl who stood, as though turned to stone, in the spot where the news had been told her. Plainly this good gossip imagined that it would be a consolation to May to hear of her importance in the matter. "Ay, it wor all along o' thee. 'Ye mun gie oop keepin' company wi' my sister,' says Mистер Fred. 'It's noan thee business,' says t'other. Grey, they call him, aw reckon—leastways, it wor on his portmanteau, for Nance Emmet's lad is porter i' station, and helped to lift him from among t' wheels o' t' engine, he did; him that wed ahr Dave's lass, tha knaws, miss, an' a steadier lad ne'er stepped i' shoe leather. Eh, an' when aw seed him all ovver blood aw fair shrieked. 'Jem,' aw says, 'ar't hurt, lad?' 'Nay, a'w'm reet eneu,' he says. 'It's Mистер Fred,' he says. 'Lord save us!' aw says, 'is he dead?' 'He's noan dead yet,' he says, 'but he's been knocked on to t' line, an' t' engine has goan ovver his foot an' mashed it all to bits; an' aw reckon,' he says; 'that t' other is noan so mich better,' he says. 'Who?' aw says. 'Him as knocked him on to t' line and then jumped dahn to get him aht o' gate o' t' engine. T' engine took him i' t' head an' knocked t' sinuses aht of him, an' they've browt him on i' t' train to t' Leeds Infirmary,' and then he telled, did Jim, it wor ovver thee they wor fratchin', miss. Eh! it's a soar job," she cried, applying her apron sympathetically to her nose.

Before May had quite realised this terrible news, she was happily taken out of herself by having to attend to her mother, who was in hysterics; and by the time her mother had been brought to herself, Fred was carried in under the charge of the village Doctor. Then May found that she had to take the command.

Her father, who was alertness itself in ordinary circumstances, or even in emergencies purely parochial, was helpless now. On the other hand, May was one of those women—and it almost seems a distinctively feminine characteristic—who, like an arch, grow firmer when weighted from without. It was she who telegraphed at once to Leeds for a surgeon and a nurse, and it was she who undertook the sole charge of Fred till such help should come from Leeds.

"Do you think the foot can be saved, Doctor?" she asked with a coolness which amazed the little local surgeon, and encouraged him to go into an elaborate "demonstrator's" description of the injuries and of the parts injured, in the very largest words in his medical repertory. This certainly was a seasonable and serviceable display of erudition.

"Do you think it can be saved?" May repeated in a frenzy of fretful anxiety.

"My dear Miss May, I fear not—I greatly fear not. In fact, I may say, my dear young lady, that it will be impossible to save it at any rate."

"Do you mean that he is himself in danger?"

"It has been a terrible shock to the system," replied the Doctor, with a grave shake of the head. "But youth, and a good constitution, and skill, my dear young lady—skill, and nursing may pull him through. He must keep up his strength, that's the main thing, and you must keep him quiet—still as a stone, my dear young lady. He's inclined to be irritable, I perceive," added the Doctor, in mild allusion to some fearful language Fred had used when his mangled foot was being handled, as he thought, with unnecessary roughness. "He is inclined to be irritable, I perceive, and that's against him. You must soothe him, my dear young lady—soothe him, and humour him, like a child."

In fact, Fred was fretfulness itself. When May was left alone with him in obedience to the Doctor's peremptory orders that only his nurse was to be allowed to stay in the room, he snarled:

"I hope you're satisfied now!"

"Fred, dear!" remonstrated May, in the gentlest tone.

"Well, it's all your doing; you set him on me. You ran off to tell him I was going for good, and to get him to head me back. It's just your doing, and no one else's."

"Oh, Fred!"

"Oh, Fred!" It's easy to say 'Oh, Fred!' and to snivel, and to say you're sorry, when it's done."

May said nothing, thinking silence less provocative than speech.

"And I suppose you told him all the rest, too—about that cheque?" he asked presently.

"Yes, I couldn't help it; he knew—he guessed there——"

Here Fred, springing suddenly up in a sitting posture in bed, giving his mangled foot such a wrench of agony as redoubled his rage, stormed at May in language which terrified her for him even more than it shocked her. With the Doctor's warning in her ears, she felt that such excitement was deadly. Before, however, she could think of anything to say or do to soothe him, he sank back upon the pillow, and began to cry like a child. The reaction from excitement upon nerves shattered by dissipation and by the shock of the accident had suddenly broken him down.

May flung herself upon her knees by the bed, and seized his hand.

"Oh, Fred; forgive me! He will never speak of it. I couldn't help it. He had guessed there was something, and I thought he knew, and I told him; but he will never speak of it. Do forgive me, Fred."

"Who told father, then?" Fred asked pathetically, still weeping.

"No one; I asked Hugh if he had; but he hadn't, and I hadn't. Father must have merely imagined it."

"He was quite certain it was my doing; and if you jilt Gower, he will find it all out from him. He must; and here am I, tied at home to stand it all! Maimed for life, if I've the ill luck to live!" he whimpered, with what appeared to poor May piteous pathos. She could do nothing but weep sympathetically in poignant distress.

"But it isn't only that," Fred continued after a little, wiping away his still falling tears. "It doesn't much matter what happens to me now, but Gower has behaved so well, that I cannot bear to think of your jilting him."

Fred's tears were genuine, if maudlin; but, with his usual insincerity, he was making a calculating and ungenerous use of his emotion, while attributing it to a generous source. He hated Hugh with all his heart; as much, perhaps, because he owed him his life, as because he owed him

the loss of his foot; and he was bent, besides, upon May's marriage to Gower, not only that he might secure his crime from detection, but also that he might secure a provision—the agency of Gower's property—for his helpless future. He was exceedingly wide-awake, in spite of his accident and of his tears.

As May remained still silent, not knowing what to say, and hardly equal to speaking at all, Fred resumed his pleading.

"I wouldn't mind this or anything, if you would not jilt him after his giving up everything—everything—for me. May, do promise me to be true to him, and then I won't mind what happens. May, will you?"

"Fred, dear," sobbed May, in utter distress, "do not trouble about this now. The Doctor says——"

"But I can't help troubling about it. You might as well tell me not to trouble about my foot. It's more of a trouble to me than my foot—a great deal more. May, do promise, do," he urged, with what, under the circumstances, appeared to her heartbreaking pathos.

"But I don't care for him; I should never make him happy, and—and—Fred, I can't, I can't."

Here Fred groaned, but only from the physical anguish of his foot, which now throbbed with sudden pain. He lay back upon the pillow with closed eyes, while the perspiration poured in streams down his face, in part from weakness, but in part also from pain, which, though far from excruciating, was more than Fred could bear.

May started up to wipe and cool his forehead, and to ease as far as she could his posture, in a perfect agony at once of anxiety and of remorse. She believed his suffering to be as much mental as bodily, and she felt that this mental trouble—for which she was responsible—was the worst possible preparation for the ordeal before him.

Fred did not recur that night to the subject of Gower. He was engrossed with his own sufferings till the Leeds surgeon arrived, and examined, with great care and gentleness, his foot.

After the examination Dr. Leat withdrew for a consultation, or for the appearance of a consultation, with the local surgeon, Dr. Jibblett.

"It's a bad business," said Dr. Leat.

Dr. Jibblett shook his head profoundly, but maintained a discreet silence until he got a more definite cue.

"Drink, eh?" asked Dr. Leat.

"He was tipsy when it happened."

"Ah!" said Dr. Leat, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "Not a good subject. The sooner it's off the better, eh?"

Here the consultation practically ended; for, with the exception of a few words upon some professional details of the pending operation, the rest of the conversation—wherewith the Doctors filled up the time necessary for the appearance of anxious and exhaustive deliberation—turned chiefly upon May, a spectacle of exceeding beauty in distress to the eyes of the gallant Dr. Leat.

"Time, eh?" asked the Leeds surgeon at last, looking at his watch to find if the consultation had lasted the length of time due to a case of this kind. Dr. Jibblett assenting, both rejoined the Vicar and May, who had waited in the dining-room for the sentence.

"We cannot save the foot, Mr. Beresford, we are very sorry to say," said Dr. Leat, with sincere sympathy, speaking to the Vicar, but looking rather at May; and glancing then from her to his colleague for his endorsement of the sentence. Dr. Jibblett nodded his head slowly in solemn and sympathetic concurrence.

"We feared not," the Vicar said sadly, and then, after a pause, he asked with a slight tremor in his voice. "That is the worst?"

"Yes; we hope so; we think so. He's young, and that's everything."

Something in the hesitation of this assurance, coupled with the haste in which it was uttered, struck chill to the Vicar's heart. He feared to ask anything more for May's sake, and for his own also.

He dare not face his fear a second time after the glimpse he caught of it. Fred's death, terrible to think of in itself, was more terrible still to the Vicar as the certain wreck of his wife's happiness, if not of her life.

There was such a silence for a second or two, as of those who fear that by a word a wild beast might be drawn upon them from its lair, and then it was the Doctor who spoke again.

"We have no doubt that all will go right with care, and quiet and good nursing. Your son's nerves are somewhat unstrung, and that makes the shock to the system more dangerous; but, as I say, he's young, and youth, with perfect rest of mind and body, will pull through yet."

Needless to say that poor May put her

own conscience-stricken construction upon the Doctor's allusion to Fred's unstrung nerves, and need of perfect freedom from mental disturbance. Plainly the Doctor had divined that Fred was ill-at-ease about something, and foresaw that this mental distress would weigh most against his recovery. In the Doctor's parting instructions to the nurse, May heard the same warning—that before all things, absolute rest of mind and body was necessary to the patient, if he was to make any headway at all towards recovery.

When, therefore, the night after the operation had been successfully performed, the trained nurse in whose charge Fred was left, came to rouse May from her haunted and broken sleep, the girl had a presentiment of what was before her.

"I'm very sorry to disturb you, miss; but he won't settle without seeing you. It's something he has on his mind, I think."

In truth, Fred, realising for the first time, suddenly and thoroughly, what this lameness for life meant to him, and, seeing a secure provision for the future only through May's marriage to Gower, took it into his head to make another and overpowering appeal to his sister to keep to her engagement. He did not send for her at such a time with the idea of taking advantage of her pity at its deepest, but simply out of the childlike impatience of sick folk to get at once anything upon which they set their hearts. Fred was exceedingly, and even critically, weak, and his weakness at once made him exacting and impatient, and made it dangerous to cross him.

"He's losing ground, miss, and, if he worries all night like this, there'll be a poor tale for the doctor in the morning."

"Do you mean," gasped May, "that he's getting weaker?" for she could not say the word that was in her heart: "sinking."

"Well, miss, it is just the turn of the tide, as I may say, and a good or bad night now means everything." It was, therefore, with the terrible thought of Fred's life being in the balance, and of the balance being in her hand, to incline as she would, that she hurried to his bedside.

"Ask her to go," Fred said fretfully; and when the nurse had retired, he returned abruptly to the point where he had left off a night or two since. "You won't jilt him, will you, May," he asked childishly, but with a feverish eagerness in his

eyes. "Promise me you won't jilt him! It's the last thing I may ask of you. May, promise me."

He threw out this, "last thing I may ask you," without an idea of his life being in the least danger, and only to frighten her into compliance.

As May remained silent in the most agonising dilemma, he continued, with a passionate impatience:

"You must promise me. I can't sleep or rest. It's killing me. Promise me; promise me," he reiterated with hysterical vehemence.

"I promise," May said at last with a sigh, wherewith she seemed to give her life up.

"That you'll marry Gower?"

"Yes."

Without another word she hurried away, and, having sent back the nurse, passed a terrible hour in her own room. Then she returned, somewhat calmer, to Fred, and, for the rest of the night, watched by him with the nurse while he slept. He passed a fairly good night, and the next morning the Doctor pronounced him—not very decidedly—somewhat better.

CHAPTER XXVII. "GOOD BYE."

A SENSATIONAL and dramatic account of Fred's accident made a feature in the local papers the morning after its occurrence, and found a place of a few lines in the London press, as transmitted by their local correspondent.

In all these accounts, which were virtually furnished by one man—the Hammersley station-master—the accident was represented as the result of a blow struck in a quarrel about a lady, by a Mr. Grey, who next moment risked his life to save the man he had just imperilled.

Next day, however, there appeared in all these papers contradictions of this account—written, some of them, by the station-master himself—wherein it was placed beyond doubt that no blow had been struck, and that Fred's fall upon the line was the result of a sudden recoil from Hugh as he faced round.

Upon the third day appeared in all these papers a letter from the Vicar, confirming this second account, and acknowledging in a few graceful and grateful words that his son owed, under Heaven, his escape from a terrible death to Hugh's heroism. This the Vicar had ascertained beyond a doubt from more than one of his parishioners,

who, being on the platform at the time, had not only seen the whole affair from beginning to end, but had heard Fred's tipsy and unprovoked assault upon Hugh.

Now the Vicar, as the most generous of men, was stirred to remorse by this true account of the matter, and to a sense that his own treatment of Hugh had been hardly less outrageous than Fred's. He had no sooner, therefore, ascertained the truth than he hurried off to Leeds to find Hugh, who had been taken to a private ward in the Infirmary.

To his great surprise and pleasure he found him up, and nearly all right again.

"You ought to have known better, sir, than to think an engine a match for a skull so thick as mine," Hugh said, in his old, frank, bright way, when the Vicar had expressed his surprise at his convalescence; "but how's Fred?"

"I hardly know how it will go with him; the Doctors speak so guardedly. He loses his foot, of course," the Vicar said with such obvious distress that Hugh hurried away from the subject.

"It was kind of you to come to see me, sir," he said simply, with genuine feeling; for, being himself as generous as the Vicar, he did not feel nearly as much resentment as the Vicar felt remorse, for his dismissal from the Vicarage.

"No one but you would say so," answered the Vicar, and then he added, with an emotion which doubled the force of his words: "I came to apologise to you as well as to thank you, Hugh."

"No, no, sir; there's no apology due," Hugh cried hastily. "You could not help thinking as you did; and, if I had been what you thought me, I should have deserved all I got. But you were mistaken, sir—though I cannot explain how—mistaken altogether about May."

"I have no doubt of that now," the Vicar replied emphatically.

"She has behaved nobly!" Hugh cried enthusiastically.

"I think I begin to understand," the Vicar said sorrowfully, his suspicions of Fred reviving.

"But pray let the matter rest, sir," Hugh hastened to say, fearing that he had been indiscreet in his hints. "It would give May pain if you stirred in it, or enquired into it. I am afraid that she would not approve of my saying even as much as I have said to you."

"I shall not question her about it; but you must allow me to warn her that no

considerations should induce her to marry a man for whom she did not care."

To this Hugh urged no objection, and the conversation then turned upon a renewal of Hugh's visit to the Vicarage. The Vicar would have carried him off there and then; but Hugh would not hear of inflicting a second invalid on the Vicarage. Accordingly, it was arranged that he should return to Hammersley as soon as he was out of the Doctor's hands.

Thus it happened that a day or two after May had promised Fred to keep to her engagement, Hugh made his appearance at the Vicarage. A day or two before her father had—casually and incidentally as he considered—given May the warning he had spoken about to Hugh; but of course May perceived that the words meant more than met her ear. Indeed the good Vicar, whatever he may have intended, left her in no doubt at all as to his views and wishes in this matter. He praised Hugh again and again to her very heart's content, and more than intimated his remorse for having misjudged both her and him so completely. In fact, if he had said in so many words to her: "I know that you were somehow forced into this engagement with Mr. Gower, which is doubly repulsive to you, as you do not care for him, and do care for Hugh; and I think it right, therefore, to urge you to let no consideration whatever drive you into a loveless marriage"—if, we say, the Vicar had said this in plain words to her, he would not have made his meaning clearer than he had by what he considered to be his diplomatic generalities.

On the very morning of the day of Hugh's arrival, the Vicar, as he handed over to May the letter announcing it, said: "You'll have another invalid on your hands, dear, to whom you must spare an hour or two."

May took and read the letter without a word, but with cheeks that flushed and paled again.

Mrs. Beresford, whom nothing more annoyed than her husband's handing May a letter before offering it to herself, asked sharply: "What do you mean?"

"Hugh; he's coming, as I told you, to stay with us."

"It's exceedingly bad taste, to say the least of it."

The Vicar looked at her in amazement; for, when he had first told her of Hugh's intended visit, she had expressed herself pleased at this opportunity to thank him for Fred's life. When, however, Fred had heard

from her of this visit, he became so furious and declared so positively that he owed to Hugh alone the loss of his foot, that his mother took that side forthwith. At the same time she had such a lurking misgiving of the truth of this version of the accident at the bottom of her heart, that she feared to speak of it to her husband lest he should at once confute it. "He's always so prejudiced against Fred," she said to herself, but she feared to herself that in this case the Vicar might prove himself right, only too conclusively.

"How bad taste!" asked the Vicar.

"Of course you believe his account of it," retorted Mrs. Beresford, on the verge of tears.

"Whose account of what?" the Vicar asked, but added at once in a softened voice. "If you mean of the accident, I have had the account of every one who saw it, except Hugh, who never spoke of it to me at all."

"I shouldn't think he would care to speak of it," retorted Mrs. Beresford significantly.

"No; it would not be like him to speak of it."

"It was all his doing," sobbed Mrs. Beresford, with a sudden break-down into an almost hysterical fit of weeping.

"My dear!" the Vicar said soothingly.

"But it was; I suppose Fred ought to know, and he says he knocked him off the platform."

There was a distressing silence of some moments before the Vicar said, with emotion:

"I am sorry Fred should think this."

"Of course Fred is never to be believed," cried Mrs. Beresford, answering what she expected the Vicar to say, rather than what he said.

"He is mistaken, dear, that's all."

Mrs. Beresford, amazed by the Vicar's gentleness, which she took for a confession of the weakness of his case, was now quite confirmed of the truth of Fred's account, and spoke of Hugh and of the audacious bad taste of his visit with extreme bitterness. Nothing, however, could provoke the Vicar into saying more against Fred's version of the affair than that it was a mistaken one. In truth, he feared above everything lest Fred's tipsey condition, which he knew had really occasioned the accident, should be brought to his mother's knowledge.

Thus it happened that Mrs. Beresford's manner to Hugh while he stayed was intolerable.

After breakfast, the Vicar said markedly to May :

"We must make up to Hugh, dear, when he comes, for your mother's manner to him."

"Yes, father."

"I owe him reparation enough for my own."

As May made no reply, the Vicar continued :

"I misjudged him cruelly, and I cannot think without pain and shame of what I said that day to make him rush off to the station, where he took his revenge by saving Fred's life." May remaining silent, he went on hesitatingly : "I misjudged you also, dear, when I thought you could change so suddenly and entirely. I ought to have known you better." Still May was confused and irresponsive. "Do not think, dear, that I am inviting a confidence which I know you are not free to give. I wished to say only that I know I wronged you, and that I feel sorry and ashamed about it."

"Oh, father!" she cried in shocked remonstrance; for, indeed, his apology to her pained her.

"Well, dear, that is the very least amend I ought to make you. As for Hugh, we must both try to make up to him for my misjudgement and insulting treatment of him."

He laid a stress on "both" that said unmistakeably: "I shall not again be so ill advised as to interfere with your love-making, which has my warmest approval." And yet the good Vicar flattered himself that his hints were the subtlest possible!

When, therefore, Hugh arrived, May was not in the least surprised by being sent out walking with him by her father, upon the pretext that both she, as a nurse, and he, as a convalescent, needed country air and exercise.

They set out for their old haunts in the woods, and, at first, talked freely enough: she, of his health, and he, of Fred's; but, after these subjects were exhausted, there fell a constrained silence between them. It was a moment like that when a man draws in a full breath either to do or to endure some supreme test of courage or of fortitude. The Vicar had kindled new hope in Hugh's heart, while Fred had extinguished what hope had remained alight in May's. While, then, he was nerving himself to dare a second proposal, and she to endure a second rejection of him, there was an oppressive silence.

At last Hugh took courage to say :

"I am afraid I was indiscreet when your father came to see me the other day. I gave him to understand that you could not help your—your engagement."

"Yes; I thought you had."

"I ought not to have hinted it?"

"I don't know; perhaps it was better."

"He promised not to enquire further into it, and he seemed so relieved that I could not feel sorry for setting you right with him."

May shook her head, but did not, and for the moment could not, say anything.

"May," cried Hugh, stopping to stand in front of her in a narrow by-path in the woods, and seizing both her hands, which, as he stammered out his impetuous proposal, he pressed to bloodlessness without her feeling the pain of the pressure. "May, you know what your father thinks about your engagement—that nothing could make it right for you to marry a man for whom you do not care—nothing. You cannot be happy, you cannot make him happy, and it is wrong every way and to every one. Even if you cared for no one else—but you do—you have let me hope—more than hope; and I cannot now give it up. I have lived in it all these years, and to part with it would be like parting with life. May, if you knew—if you had an idea how much you are to me, and have always been to me, and will be to me always, you would not—you could not—keep to this engagement."

Then Hugh proceeded even more ardently and incoherently to try to express all that May had been, was, and would be to him for ever. Once or twice May made a faint and ineffectual effort to interrupt him; but in reality the last wish of her heart was to interrupt him.

While she listened, she had strangely enough in the background of her mind the thought that these words must be stored up in her memory as all that would be left after to-day for her starving heart to live upon henceforth—that they would be to her henceforth "dear as remembered kisses after death."

When at last Hugh had ended his passionate outpourings, she said :

"Oh, Hugh, I cannot—I cannot now. Fred has been very ill—and all depended upon his resting—upon his mind being at ease; the Doctor said so. He said his life hung on that, and he was sinking, and could not rest, because he thought that I was going to break my engagement, and he said the thought was killing him; and

the nurse thought so, and she woke me to go to him to tranquillise him—'he was just at the turn of the tide,' she said. And I went and found him in such a state of agitation about the engagement, and he implored me to promise to keep it, and I promised—I had to promise; he was so excited," she added. Then, in a lower voice of solemnity: "It was more than a promise. I must keep it—I must!" she cried, in poignant distress.

Something more that she said in incoherent explanation suggested to Hugh what indeed was the fact—that she had associated the promise with her prayers made after it for Fred's recovery, and had thus, somehow, consecrated it as a vow. But, even without such consecration, the promise thus given would, he felt, be as sacred to May as almost to outweigh with her all her other reasons for keeping to her engagement put together.

He said what he could to try to shake her resolution; but, seeing that the only effect of his pleading was to distress her, he gave up, at last, in despair.

As they reached the edge of the wood on their return to the Vicarage, he said in great agitation:

"Let us say good-bye here, May."

"You're not going?" she cried, with a sudden sense that the very earth was sinking from beneath her feet.

"It's better," he said only; too much moved for the moment to say more.

She looked up at him with white face, parted lips, and eyes that seemed to stare at a death too sudden and terrible to be realised.

"Oh, you must not go; not yet," she pleaded as for life.

"It's better; I cannot bear it."

She looked at him still, with the perplexed and fixed look of one who cannot yet quite distinguish in the sudden darkness the horror confronting him.

"But you will come back? You're not going again away?" she asked at last.

Hugh shook his head.

"Life here would kill me now," he said.

"There's father," she said with sudden hope, grasping at any straw.

"He will understand. May, I must be alone—I must go."

"But you will come back; you will come back before—before you——"

Here she broke down into the happy relief of tears. The strain of sleepless watching by Fred's bed; of anxiety about him; and of

her long agony of self-conflict had shattered her nerves and undermined her self-command.

Then Hugh took her in his arms and kissed her tears away, and soothed her as though she were a little child, with words of inexpressible tenderness.

At length she disengaged herself, ashamed of her breakdown, ashamed, also, of those caresses, which yet she treasured in her memory, to be gone over again and again as the sacred rosary of her love.

When they reappeared at the Vicarage Mrs. Beresford gave Hugh a reception which might alone explain his sudden departure. Even the Vicar hardly dared press him to stay for a course of such insupportable snubbing.

"The fact is, Hugh, Mrs. Beresford is nearly distraught about Fred; but when she comes to herself she will be as thankful to you for his life as we are," the Vicar said shamefacedly in bidding him good-bye. "You will come again when she is more herself?" he added.

But Hugh, not having Mrs. Beresford in all his thoughts, hardly heard, and answered at random.

LEGENDS OF THE COUNTY DONEGAL.

THE wild and picturesque County of Donegal, Ultima Thule of Ireland, which possesses romantic regions as yet unexplored by the artist, is the home of a host of superstitions—pathetic, fanciful, or grotesque. The fairies are supposed to hold their revels as in ancient days, invisible to mortals, except upon May eves, and Hallowe'ens; witchcraft exerts its uncanny power in almost every townland; and mermaids, called by the peasantry "whitewives," still haunt boggy tarns of inky blackness, and deep, clear loughs, embosomed in the mountains.

It will not surprise the reader to hear that the most numerous, as well as the most touching, of these superstitions relate to the world of spirits—that mysterious realm, lying, it maybe, somewhere near us, which we ourselves must perforce enter in course of time.

The desire to discover something about that spiritual state, so awful because unknown, is surely the motive that influences the ignorant peasant in his speculations, as well as the grave and earnest student, and the less reverent spiritualist. This year-

ing of the people after a little knowledge of what is unrevealed, has given birth to many strange fancies; among others, to the idea that the souls of the dead, made restless by the tears and regrets of survivors, are unable to get to heaven, and hover near the earth, sometimes appearing to reprove their relatives for their excessive grief. The writer has frequently heard widows and mothers remonstrated with, by well-meaning neighbours, in the following terms:

"Dinna be crying an' lamenting that way, or you'll keep him frae his rest," and has seen the mourners forthwith struggle to restrain their tears, thus impelled by the very strongest motive that could be presented to them. This belief is common to the members of all religious denominations in Donegal.

A Presbyterian household, in the village of Carrigans, is believed to have been visited by certain strange experiences about fifteen years ago. Jack and Nelly Boyle, and their two grown-up sons, were ignorant people who rarely went to meeting, and paid little heed to the exhortations of the minister. The parents, born at a time when the schoolmaster was not so much abroad as he is in these days, had not received any education, and had not attempted to give their children any. Of the two sons, Alick, the eldest, was a sober, industrious young man, the mainstay of the family; but his younger brother was a ne'er-do-weel, who usually drank his wages, and often fell into the hands of the police for cursing the Pope when drunk, and thereby exciting his Roman Catholic neighbours to combat. For where the southern Irishman trails his coat by way of challenge to all combatants, the quarrelsome Ulster Protestant speaks disrespectfully of the Pope, while the Roman Catholic breaks forth into abuse of King William, of "glorious, pious, and immortal memory."

Old Jack Boyle had a bad illness brought on by vexation at his son's conduct; he died, was honourably waked, and decently buried.

But his widow and eldest son did not shake off their grief after the funeral, as the villagers expected them to do. Instead of this, Nelly sat weeping by her lonely hearth, and Alick went to his work with dejected step and bent head. Thus a fortnight went by.

At length a neighbour resolved to re-

monstrate with Nelly, and, going into her house, began to remark upon the folly of "taking trouble," that is, mourning too bitterly.

"Why but you try an' get your mind a wee lifted, Nelly, dear? Jack, decent man, has done wi' the troubles o' this world, an' sure you wouldna wish to keep him frae his rest?"

"Na, na, Kitty, I'm no lamenting after Jack, now. I was put from it, an' I'll just tell you the way it was. It was the night after the funeral that I heered Jack's foot on the floor, an' then I felt his hand on my shoulder happing me; but I couldna put a speak on him. Weel, he came three nights after other, an' still I didna speak; 'An', says Alick when I tould him, says he, 'Mother, keep up the fire the night, an' see if you can see him.'"

"Well, Nelly!" from her breathless audistress.

"Weel, I made a bonnie wee fire, but that night he didna come ava; but yesterday, in the gloaming, when Alick was sitting on the stane at the side o' the house, he felt a waft of cold air coming up frae the garden, an' he knowed his father was there. 'If you're my father,' says he, 'speak, an' say what's keeping you frae your rest.' Wi' that the father's voice made answer, 'It's your mother an' you, wi' your crying an' lamenting that's keeping me out o' heaven. I'm flying about the earth, an' I canna get to my rest. Tell your mother to stop her crying after me, an' be you a good son to her, an' keep yoursel' quiet, and the house quiet, an' have patience wi' thou poor rambling boy, an' now fareweel, I'm going to my rest.'"

No more tears were shed by Nelly or Alick, and the younger brother, impressed perhaps by his father's remembrance of him in another state of being, became sober and respectable.

Almost as touching as the above superstition, is the Roman Catholic belief that the souls of the dead return to earth, and visit their friends every Hallowe'en.

In Donegal, upon that sacred vigil, as night approaches, the door is left wide open, the hearth carefully swept, and food provided; and seats are always placed for the silent and invisible guests, who are believed to form part of the company. It does not matter that the food remains untasted, that no footfall has been heard; the people are convinced that their lost parents, children, sisters, or sweethearts,

still interested in their fate, have come to visit them.

In the village above referred to, reside three old, unmarried people, a brother and two sisters "poor, desolate orphans," as they call themselves; though, as they have been orphans for more than thirty years, the pity they excite on that account is not so fresh as it once was. But their remembrance of their parents is as fresh as ever; and for thirty years their door has been left open on Hallowe'en, their hearth swept, and two stools placed before the fire, while at either side sit the grey-headed "orphans," firmly convinced that their father and mother are bearing them company. It is but rarely that the spirits of the restless dead appear to survivors; but occasionally some broken-hearted mourner has to tell a story of such appearance, or some child lisps that his mother has returned from the undiscovered country; and living mothers, knowing the tender clinging of a mother's heart, find it easy to believe him.

Tourists in the Highlands of Donegal, on their way to Carrick and Glencolumbkille, pass through the beautiful town of Killybegs, situated on the edge of a noble harbour, and flanked by the gigantic mountain range of Kronarad. In sight of this exquisite spot is a wild district called Crocknafiola, and, in a cabin in the district, the following events are said to have taken place:

James Doolan's wife was about to die. The doctor had done all that skill could suggest; the priest had performed the last offices of his religion, and the husband and neighbours were "waiting on her," that is, watching her last moments.

Kitty, the sickly little child, whose piteous wailing had scarcely ceased during the mother's illness, began to cry loudly at this moment, and the dying woman opened her eyes and gazed anxiously at her. She beckoned to the father, and, as he bent down to catch her faint utterance, she said:

"Don't forget me, James, and never put another woman in my place over those childer."

"Never, never," replied the weeping husband.

"But you be to promise it," persisted the poor mother. "Promise!" and she looked from father to children with a wistful gaze, as if loth to leave them. James Doolan was very ready to give the promise she

required, and added to it a spontaneous assurance intended to express all his sorrow and affection.

"Ay, Sheelah, woman, I promise that I'll put nae woman in your place, an' I'll bury you decent and respectable. You sall hae the grandest wake an' funeral that was iver seen in this townland."

Whether Sheelah was as much comforted by this prospect as he intended her to be, does not appear; for, just then, a neighbour put a plate into her nerveless hand, on which were twelve lighted ends of candle, supposed to represent the Twelve Apostles giving light to the departing soul.

As her hand dropped, Sheelah's dying look turned for the last time to the wailing child.

James mourned her very sincerely. It was not long after the funeral that he awoke one night while the fire was still bright, and saw his dead and buried wife seated in her old place.

While he looked she got up and moved over to the bed where the children lay. She bent over them and "happed" them carefully; but at this juncture James' terror grew overwhelming, and, as he muttered rapid Paters and Aves, she disappeared. As time went on his grief grew lighter, and at last he forgot his promise to the dead, and courted a handsome girl whom he met at a fair in Killybegs. She accepted him, and the wedding-day was fixed, but as she lived at some distance, he found that he must leave the children under a neighbour's care, while he went to be married.

But the day before he was to leave home, he went to the bog for a creel of turf, locking the four children up alone in the house. On his return with the turf, he was surprised to find that they were washed and neatly dressed, instead of dirty and ragged as he had left them.

"Who was it washed yez, an' combed yer hair, an' dressed yez sae gran?" asked he.

"It was we'er ma," replied the eldest boy.

"An' what did yer ma say to yez?" inquired the startled father.

"She said she wouldna be coming back to see us because you were going to get married; an' she told us to be good childer, an' bade God bless us."

James was so terrified and conscience-stricken, that he forthwith sent a message to the handsome girl to say that he "rued," and that there would be no wedding. His

neighbours, who heard the story, applauded his conduct; they had disapproved strongly of him for thinking of breaking his promise to the dead, but it would appear that they saw little harm in his breach of faith with the living. It is to be hoped that the ill-treated maiden soon found a more desirable admirer than James Doolan.

Besides the anxiety about their children, which is supposed to keep the souls of mothers in a state of restlessness, and the uneasiness caused the departed generally by the excessive grief of survivors, there is one other cause assigned by the superstitious peasant for the alleged occasional appearance of the dead. An unfulfilled promise, or unpaid debt, will suffice to keep one who has had a tender conscience "from his rest." If any act of dishonesty, or unrighteous dealing has been perpetrated, they say that it is impossible for the perpetrator to rest quietly in his grave. A very curious story in illustration of this belief occurs to the writer:

Thady and Grace Connor lived on the borders of a large turf bog, in the parish of Clondevaddock, where they could hear the Atlantic surges thunder upon the shore, and see the wild storms of winter sweep over Muckish Mountain and his rugged neighbours. Even in summer the cabin by the bog was dull and dreary enough. Thady Connor worked in the fields, and Grace made a livelihood as a pedlar, carrying a basket of remnants of cloth, calico, druggot and frieze about the country. The people rarely visited any large town, and found it convenient to buy from Grace, who was welcomed in many a lonely house, where a table was hastily cleared that she might display her wares. Being considered a very honest woman, she was frequently entrusted with commissions to the shops in Letterkenny and Ramelton. As she set out towards home, her basket was generally laden with little gifts for her children.

"Grace, dear," would one of the kind housewives say, "here's a farrel of oaten cake, wi' a taste o' butter on it; tak' it wi' you for the weans;" or "here's half a dozen of eggs; you've a big family to support."

Small Connors of all ages crowded round the weary mother to rifle her basket of these gifts. But her thrifty, hard life came suddenly to a close. She died after an illness of a few hours, and was waked and buried as handsomely as Thady could afford.

Thady was in bed the night after the funeral, and the fire still burned brightly, when he saw his departed wife cross the room and bend over the cradle. Terrified, he muttered rapid prayers, covering his face with the blanket; and on looking up again, the appearance was gone. Next night he lifted the infant out of the cradle and laid it beside him in bed, hoping thus to escape his ghostly visitor; but Grace was presently in the room, and stretching over him to wrap up the child. Shrinking and shuddering, the poor man exclaimed:

"Grace, woman, what is it brings you back? What is it you want wi' me?"

"I want naething frae you, Thady; but to put thou wean back in her cradle," replied the spectre in a tone of scorn. "You're a cowardly man, an' still were that same; but my sister Rose will na be 'feared' for me; tell her to meet me to-morrow evening in the old wallsteada."

Rose lived with her mother, about a mile off. She obeyed her sister's summons without the least fear, and kept the strange tryst in due time.

"Rose, dear," said Grace, appearing before her sister in the old wallsteads, "my mind's oneasy about them two red shawls that I left in the basket. Matty Hunter an' Jane Taggart paid me for them, an' I bought them, Friday was eight days. Gie them the shawls the-morrow. An' Mosey McCorkell gied me the price o' a wiley coat—it's in under the other things in the basket. An' now fareweel; I can get to my rest."

"Grace, Grace, stop a wee minute," cried the faithful sister, as the dear voice grew fainter, and the dear face began to fade; "Grace, darling! Thady? The childer? One word mair!" but neither cries nor tears could detain the spirit hastening to its rest!

An unfulfilled promise will, according to both Protestants and Catholics, keep the departed soul from rest; and if a young couple, who have plighted their troth to each other, should be separated by death, the survivor sometimes appears at the wake, and, just before the lid of the coffin is closed, takes the stiff hand once so tenderly beloved, and falters out the words, "I release thee from thy troth." If this ceremony should be neglected, it is the belief of the people that the survivor would not be free to enter into any new engagement, but would be liable to be haunted by the involuntary breaker of the contract.

Many a Donegal man has seen his neighbour's wraith: if in the morning, and

coming towards him, he looked upon the appearance as an omen of long life ; but if in the evening, and turned away from him, he at once anticipated the worst. In this case he was almost sure to whisper what he had seen pretty widely ; but if he happened to be a kind and considerate person he concealed it strictly from the doomed neighbour.

Such a considerate person was Sam Bradley, of Cloughfin. While in charge of his landlord's newly-built house, he was one evening seated by the kitchen hearth, when he saw the owner's mother enter the room, cross it, and go towards the staircase. Hearing no footsteps overhead, he had the curiosity to go upstairs and look for the old lady. She was nowhere to be seen. He then felt convinced that he had seen her wraith. He was sorry for her when he saw her next morning in her old house, for, although she seemed to be in excellent health and spirits, he knew she would not live to move into the new house.

He was perfectly right ; she was buried the day before her son's "fitting."

Very similar to the above is the story of Tom Gilmour's grandmother, which was told us by the hero of the adventure. Tom's grandmother lived in Saint Johnston for ninety years. She had been a notable housewife, and a very energetic woman in her day ; but for the last ten years of her life she had only been able to move from the bed to her chair in the chimney corner.

As Tom smoked his pipe one summer evening, leaning against the wall of the house, he saw, as he thought, his grandmother leave the door close by, and walk slowly down the street, supported by her stick. She turned the corner and he lost sight of her.

"Billy," he called to his brother, who was chopping wood near the door, "did you see the old woman ?"

"Ay, Tom, an' I havena seen her travel sae clever this many's the day."

"Weel, Billy, she'll no travel long in this world. Come here," and leading him to the window, he showed him the grandmother calmly knitting in her usual place. The omen was accomplished within three weeks.

William McPherson was a labourer in the parish of Taughboyne. It was very pleasant on summer evenings, when his little Mary, his only child, came running to meet him with her hands full of roses

and woodbine from the hedges in the lane that led to his door. Then the little one, prattling silver-toned nonsense, used to conduct the weary man home.

On a June evening, he entered the lane as usual, and Mary, in her blue frock, dotted with white spots, sprang out of the ditch and trotted by his side. But she did not say a word. While he wondered at her silence, she ran on and fell headforemost into a well at the edge of the road, near his own door. He saw the accident, and heard the splash she made in falling, and rushed forward in an agony. There was no Mary in the well—nothing but the mosses that shone, and the ferns that nodded, down under the brimming water.

His child met him on the threshold, and flew into his arms.

"Peggy," said he to his wife next morning, "dinna let Mary out o' your sight the day."

Peggy was too busy to ask questions, and he did not explain his reason for the command. It was washing day, and the mother was glad to let the child go with her cousins to visit her aunt across the fields.

"Where's Mary ?" was her father's first word when he came home from work.

"She's at her aunt's."

With an oath he hurried in quest of the child.

"Where's Mary ?" he asked, looking wildly round his sister's kitchen.

"She ran home half an hour ago."

Straight to the fatal spot went poor William ; and there lay his pretty little Mary on the ferns and mosses at the bottom of the well.

ACONITES.

BROAD green leaves, and cup of gold,
Starring all the wet black mould,
Gleaming through the drifted snow,
Giving back the fitful glow,
Where the sudden sunbeams peep,
To wake the snowdrop from her sleep,
Heralds of our spring delights—
The aconites, the aconites !

Brave as hope, and strong as faith,
Laughing at the bitter breath
Of the east wind, fierce and free,
Sweeping from the Northern sea.
Surging winter's reign is gone,
April will be here anon,
See, where February invites !
The world to hail her aconites.

Sweet the primrose' tender hue,
Sweet the violets' scented blue,
Sweet the wild rose, pranking gay
'Mid the "moonlight-coloured" may.
But dearest, freshest, as our first,
By wild weather roughly nursed,
We give our promise-blooms their rights,
Our welcome to the aconites.

RATS! RATS!

ALMOST everyone will agree with the writer in the opinion that rats are one of the most disgusting species of living creatures. They are everywhere a nuisance and a pest. Mice are bad enough, but rats are tenfold worse. The frogs that came into the houses of the Egyptians, and into the bed-chamber of Pharaoh, could hardly have been worse. Rats are a plague wherever they are found, as every farmer, and multitudes besides, know to their cost. And yet it may be possible to say something good of them. They have a place in creation, and therefore a use, for nothing exists in vain; though to nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand their room is greatly preferred to their company. Rats, too, have a history; that is, as a species; and not a few amusing anecdotes may be told of them, and some that are interesting, if not amusing.

Now there is a mystery about the native country of the best known species of rat, the common brown rat. It is frequently called, in books and otherwise, the "Norway rat," and it is said to have been imported into this country in a ship-load of timber from Norway. Against this hypothesis stands the fact that when the brown rat had become common in this country, it was unknown in Norway, although there was a small animal like a rat, but really a lemming, which had made its home there. The prevailing opinion of naturalists is that the brown rat is a native of India and Persia, that it migrated into European Russia, and was thence imported into England by means of merchant ships.

But wherever it came from, it is here, as may be said of a great many other disagreeable things. There is a rat, however, which is a native of England. This is the black rat, which, singularly enough, is fast disappearing before its modern rival, the brown rat. The common water-rat is a variety of the native species.

The black rat is a rather timid creature, with longer ears and tail than his distant relative, Mr. Brownie. His lack of strength is partly compensated for by his greater activity; but he is no match for his brown rival; and in this case, as in many others, "the weakest goes to the wall." Many cases in proof might be given, that, like the American Indians and the aborigines of Australia, the natives are fast disappearing before the intruders, and their audacious

and go-ahead ways. A case or two in point may be given.

A London rat-catcher had had a fine day's sport, and secured a considerable number of both black and brown rats, which he shut up in a cage. When he opened the covering of the cage in the morning, he was astonished to find that all the black rats had disappeared. The fact was that the brown rats had killed and eaten all the black ones.

In an old book called "The Vermin Catcher," the writer, who, it appears, was a practised hand, says:

"I was once exercising my employment at a gentleman's house, and when the night came that I appointed to catch, I set all my traps going as usual; and in the lower part of the house I caught the Norway (brown) rat, but in the upper part I took nothing but the black rat. I then put them together in the great cage until the morning, that the gentleman might see them, when the Norway rats killed the black rats, and devoured them in my presence."

This favours the common opinion, to which there are, however, not a few exceptions, that such places as cellars, pigsties, and stables are the chosen home of the brown rat, while the black prefers the ceiling and wainscoting of houses, and places under the tiles and rafters of other buildings.

The black rat may still be found, though more rarely than formerly, in the London sewers; but its metropolitan headquarters are in the Isle of Dogs, where it is said to abound in the numerous ditches, and to come out and feed on whatever may be cast up by the tide of the Thames.

A house which the writer occupied for some years was for a long time infested with rats, especially in the early part of his tenancy. The previous tenant had devoted one large room at the topmost storey as a store-room for his home-made hams and bacon. The stock for the year's domestic use would sometimes be hanging there. It was hung up in a way in which one would think the rats could not get to it; but they did, and had many a rare feast, for nice bacon was too tempting a viand for the virtue even of rats. They found their way under the floor and above the ceiling, and made numerous large holes in the skirting. They must have visited the place in considerable numbers.

This reminds one of an incident of school life. While prayers were proceed-

ing one day, one of the boys burst out laughing. He was "had up," of course, and was required to give an account of his irreverent behaviour. He apologised by saying that he saw a rat quietly descending the bell rope, which hung down in the schoolroom. He was told, of course, that he ought not to have been looking about him. The master was little disposed to extremities, but must maintain discipline and order. So the boy was doomed to be punished, unless next morning he was prepared with some account of the incident in rhyme. The boy set his wits to work, and the muses favoured his suit—if, indeed, the muses had anything to do with it—for in the morning he was prepared with some lines, which had, at least, the virtue of brevity:

There was a rat, for want of stairs,
Came down the rope to go to prayers.

Of course, he escaped his punishment.

Returning to the house just mentioned, which was an old one, the back part especially, perhaps two or three centuries old, there were several large buildings running back contiguous to the stables and hay-loft. Away behind, at no great distance, on the opposite sides of a rapid stream, were a tan-yard and a fellmonger's premises. Here the rats had their headquarters, and thence they had no difficulty, by means of drains below and old timbers and roofing above, in making their way into the house. A room or two at the back were seldom if ever used—they were unfurnished, in fact—and thus the whole place was at their mercy; and my slumbers were not unfrequently disturbed by the noise of numerous rats scampering overhead.

Occasionally, too, a big fellow would be seen making his way along a naked beam in the scullery, or elsewhere. After a time the house was partly rebuilt at the back, and some of the old buildings were removed. Then there was a fine hunt. An immensely large chimney, built with huge blocks of stone, large enough for a coach and horses to turn inside if they were small enough to get there, had to be taken down for the enlargement of the kitchen. Here it was that the rats had made a rendezvous, and a kind of sub-storehouse. Here they took refuge from the workmen; but it was an insecure hiding-place. Their retreat was cut off below by a number of men with sticks and a small army of dogs, while the masons above removed stone after stone from the chimney, and then,

when the rats tried to escape, they were immediately killed by the men or the dogs.

A more clever, but less exciting method of getting rid of rats may be mentioned here as a matter of fact, related upon high authority.

A gentleman in the country was much annoyed by rats, which constantly visited his cellar. He caught some of them in traps, but the nuisance was little abated. Knowing something of their habits, he resolved on a plan by which he hoped to rid himself of them.

He provided himself with a large oak box, half filled with meal, which was placed in the cellar, while he sat—concealed with sacks—to watch, just having a spy-hole. The rats soon made their appearance, first reconnoitring, then timidly approaching the box, and, after a time, attacking the meal, keeping a look-out all the time.

The next night the same plan was repeated, and the rats were emboldened to enter the box. The third night saw them in yet greater numbers, and, as the gentleman had placed little ladders beside the box for their convenience, they were soon gorging away at the meal. The fourth night was to be the crisis. The rats had lost all fear; and while they were devouring the remains of the meal, down came the strong lid, and they were all safe.

The next morning the box and its contents were removed from the cellar, and launched into a pond, where the robbers met their decreed fate.

A case of the wholesale destruction of rats was related in the "Quarterly Review" some years ago. It is nearly fifty years since a persistent attempt was made to construct an atmospheric railway from London to Croydon. The writer remembers it well. At the top of the large iron tube, which was laid down between the rails, was a leather valve, which was daily well greased that the tube might be kept air-tight. In the night, when all was quiet, the rats would enter this tube in great numbers, to lick off the grease, and, in the morning, when the engines would get to work to pump out the air, the rats would be sucked out by hundreds; for even rats cannot live without air.

It was common in some country places, in former days, when house room was spare, to turn the best bed-room into a store-room for flour and corn for home use; and the custom has not died out yet, at

least in Wales. The writer had a disagreeable experience of this not very many years ago. In connection with the re-establishment of a charity trust deed, which for half a century had been mal-administered, he had occasion to go to a rural part of Radnorshire, to preside at a meeting for the nomination of new trustees. It was some miles from a railway station, and the journey involved his staying at the small house of a farmer, who farmed some two thousand acres of poor land.

The dinner which preceded the meeting was unique: a part of a ham boiled in the same vessel with a small leg of mutton, and cooked with reference to the broth which was to be made of the liquor, and served up with potatoes resembling lumps of soap. But this was a delight to the night which followed. I was to occupy the best bed-room, and I was not long in undressing. As soon as the slender candle was extinguished and I had got into bed, it became painfully manifest that I had undesirable company. Several sacks or portions of sacks of flour and corn were in the room, and the rats were in attendance for their nightly feast. Having an extreme disgust, a very horror of the noxious vermin, sleep was impossible. I knew that though rats are set down among gnavorous animals, they have a fondness for flesh, and have no scruples about gnawing away at the cheeks, or nose, or ears of man, woman, or child, alive or dead. It was not a pleasant reflection by any means. The only remedy was to keep up such a noise that they could not, or would not, settle to their business. Perhaps I succeeded, so far at least as to keep myself intact. Happily, it was summer, and I had to rise at four that I might breakfast and ride some miles to catch an early train. The visit has not been repeated.

This matter of personal experience, however, is exceeded by the following case, which may be perfectly true.

A poor Frenchman, making his way from Dover to London, was attracted to a small roadside inn. Weary with his journey, and hoping to get supper and a bed, he entered. "Bring me," said he to the landlord, "a leetle bit of bread and cheese, also some portare, which I sall take, and myself to bed." His supper finished, he placed the remnants of his meal in his pockets, and went to bed. Alas! he could not get a wink of sleep. In the room were some sacks of flour, and he had no sooner put on his nightcap and put out his

light, than a party of rats manifested their presence. Without any ceremony they went from sack to sack, eating to their hearts' content, all seeming as merry as crickets. The article of dress in which the remnants of the supper had been placed contained also the owner's purse, and for the safety of the latter, he had placed it under his pillow. The odour of the cheese attracted several of the rats. Instinctively the Frenchman passed his hands over his nose and ears, to see, as we say, whether they had been gnawed off or not. Satisfied on this point, he now and then felt the rats scampering over his face, and attempts at sleep were unavailing. At length he jumped up and, calling for a light, demanded his bill.

The bill was brought. To his utter astonishment ten shillings was the charge for the supper and bed. The Frenchman could not believe his eyes. He read it over and over again, but could not make it less. Then he began to rate the landlord, and complained loudly of the rats.

"Plague on those rats!" said the landlord. "I wish, mounseer, that I could make them scout. I'll pay him well that can."

The Frenchman saw in this proposal an easy way of settlement, and a retort upon the avaricious landlord into the bargain, so he offered to give him a sure cure if he would settle the account. "Agreed," said the landlord. And the Frenchman began:

First, den—regardez, if you please—
Bring to this spot a leetle bread and cheese.
Eh bien! a half-filled pot of portare, too;
And den you get de rats to sup vid you;
And after dat—no matter dey be willing—
For vat dey eat you charge dem just ten shilling;
And I am sure, ven dey behold the score,
Dey'll quit your house, and never come no more."

OLD CHELSEA.

THERE is a subtle charm about Chelsea which is not of the day before yesterday; but which brings with it a faint echo of the life and gaiety of old times. The charm is not always there; it comes and goes like the shadow of clouds on a landscape. You may pass and repass, and see nothing but the common-place and dreary; and again there are days when by some mysterious change in the surrounding atmosphere, everything assumes a certain grace and dignity of aspect: slums are transfigured, and slatternly loiterers invested with something of the picturesque; courts and alleys are shrouded in soft shadows, and at every street corner you

gain an evanescent glimpse of the features of some past century. It is with Chelsea as with some old dame, who, in the full light of day shows only furrows and wrinkles; but catch a glimpse of the same face reflected in some clouded tarnished mirror, and, behold, the beauty is there once more.

And Chelsea should be seen under the influence of old prints and drawings. Its great houses should stand out once more, with towers and turrets, with gardens and pleasure-grounds, pyramids, and fountains, and quaintly-cut hedges. The water stairs are there, with my lord's barge in waiting, and crowds of wherries dancing on the tide, and the ferry-boat putting forth with its load of travellers.

Or is it the old Hospital, the one unchanging feature of the scene, with Ranelagh close by, and the Rotunda peering through the trees? Or, should we look over the shoulder of young David Cox, who has come to sketch from his lodgings in Lambeth the red brick church and the timber bridge beyond, and the green banks of the river? Or a bit of the King's Road: just a white house with a sort of piazza in front and an old post-chaise at the door; with a hedge and a turn of the road, a few trees and quiet pastures beyond—a scene as purely sweet and peaceful as the heart could desire?

Yes, that is the King's Road, Chelsea, some sixty years ago. And now! Why, even the memories of five-and-twenty years ago are somewhat puzzled and confused in the King's Road of to-day. It opens now in quite a stately way from little Sloane Square, which was then such a tumbled, frowny kind of place, but which is now putting on airs of grandeur. There are fine shops, and tall, new buildings; and in an opening yonder, leading once to a labyrinth of quiet little slums, is a chaos of broken ground, with boardings, and sheds, and an engine-house spurting forth white steam, out of which rise the outlines of stately brick mansions, which architects and house agents may be pardoned for calling "palatial."

And thus the title, so long borne by Chelsea as the village of palaces, seems to be once more partly justified; the palaces are there, but where is the village? London, fashionable, wealthy London, is invading the old village, and its crooked, tortuous ways are giving place to fine squares and monumental terraces.

But, before we have done with the King's

Road, it assumes a more familiar aspect. Here are butchers' shops festooned with cheap joints, and resounding with cries of "who'll buy, who'll buy!" Here are greengrocers' and small coal shops, where vans may be hired for pleasure or for removing furniture; here are eating-houses and fried-fish shops, and cheap shoes and slop clothing hanging out for sale. And then, passing beyond the busy mart of the artisan quarter, we come to the quietude of the World's End.

The place was not unaptly named, for even now it is not easy to guess what lies beyond; and at an earlier period there were only narrow miry lanes in the way of thoroughfares, which lost themselves in the mazes of market gardens and deep ditches; and beyond here the King's Road was a private way, leading to a ferry, and was used by the King when he rode a-hunting to chase the deer that was in his park of Richmond, or about Roehampton. And in the days of William of Orange—who rode often enough along this King's Road—a conspiracy was hatched among the Jacobites in France to waylay and assassinate the King among these narrow lanes and waterways.

But for the gay young sparks of twenty years ago, the King's Road and the World's End suggested, chiefly, Cremorne, those gardens of delight which seemed to continue the traditions of Vauxhall and Ranelagh in our own times; but with a difference: the elegance and modish flavour all gone, and nothing left but a rowdy kind of gaiety. And so we may remember the World's End, when we heard the chimes at midnight; the tavern lights shining forth, and the flashing lamps of carriages and cabs, drags and omnibuses with prancing horses adding to the confusion, and the shouts of the drivers and conductors mingling with shrill laughter and snatches of songs.

Well, this social morass is now planted over, and Chelsea, no longer gay, devotes itself to building and improving. A street or two stretch over the former site of Cremorne Gardens; but nobody has thought it worth while to perpetuate the memory in the name of street or terrace.

Even beyond the World's End, Chelsea is still continued, but it is the Chelsea of another hemisphere, with palms and tropical ferns and orchids, and rare plants of all kinds, flourishing under acres of glass, along the winding way that leads to Fulham; and for its glass-houses and nurseries

of rare plants, old Chelsea, too, was somewhat famed. But we will confine ourselves to the temperate zone for the present, and, accepting the World's End as a barrier, turn towards the river. For a vague knowledge of the world that ends hereabouts tells us that the river is close at hand. And, indeed, the World's End leads directly into Beaufort Street, and so towards Battersea Bridge.

Now, in the name of Beaufort Street there lurks a powerful perfume of antiquity; and about the street itself there is a quiet, old-fashioned solidity which adds a certain interest to a retrospective glance. The solid, old-world villas—enclosing a wide quadrangle of roomy gardens—must date from the destruction of Beaufort House, and the gardens, no doubt, formed part of the pleasure grounds of that noble mansion, once the seat of the most noble and potent His Grace of Beaufort.

But, before his time—which was Charles the Second's time—and later, the house was known as Buckingham House, having belonged, successively, to the two well-known Dukes of the house of Villiers. Charles the First bought the house, and gave it to his favourite, George Villiers, as one gives a trinket to a friend, and the King bought it from Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, a Lord Treasurer of the period, in whose time was erected the handsome gateway by Inigo Jones, which, at a later period, was removed to Chiswick House. And before the house became Buckingham House it was known as Salisbury House, from Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, who inherited it from his sagacious father who got it as a gift from a woman—Lady Dacre—the widow of that Lord Dacre whose distinction it is that his father was hanged for murder.

All this brings us well up the stream of time to Elizabeth's days; and, earlier still, we shall find the Paulets in possession, who got the place as it were from the edge of the axe—the axe that struck off the gray and venerated head of Sir Thomas More.

For here stood More's house, no doubt; his house with the famous garden where King Harry walked in familiar intercourse with the sagacious old Chancellor, his arm over the other's shoulder. Here came Erasmus, who has given us one of his vivid pictures of the Chancellor and his family. Indeed, in one way or another, the figure of Sir Thomas More seems more familiar to us than that of any other man of his period. Often his barge went

to and fro from those stairs by the river; the waterway was London's great highway then, and all the world passed up and down on the bright sparkling stream, in the bravery and show of a continuous pageant. Was it to Westminster for the Court and the King, or to Lambeth for the Archbishop, or to Fulham for our friend the Bishop—all was one to the sturdy oarsmen; till at last they brought him to Traitor's Gate and the Tower, and Father Thames saw him no more. But we still hear the echo of the frosty merriment of the old statesman who clings to his jokes to the end, and takes leave of the world with a quip and a quirk, honestly believing that he is to join a merrier assembly in heaven.

And now the river lies before us in all its stillness and gloom, but with a wondrous light upon it that transforms and ennobles the whole scene. Great banks of vapour rise in masses above, the clouds of heaven mingling with the fumes of earth; and yet, through all, there breaks a strange and mystic radiance.

On one hand rises a forest of timbers from a chaos of cranes, of piles and caissons, of scaffolding and other gear. The old bridge of Battersea is gone, and its successor is gradually rising from all that confusion. Beyond, the steamboats all lie in a clump, and Battersea rises from the opposite bank, all as dark as a thunder-cloud, and edged with the radiance from above. The river, sweeping round in a silvery reach, breaks in the foreground into all kinds of plays of light and shadow, and the barges moored below show their masts and flapping streamers, and high-peaked booms all swathed in red sails.

It is well to remember now that we are upon Cheyne Walk, and all this gloomy radiance seems a fitting accompaniment to the memories that come upon us concerning Thomas Carlyle, and the silent gloom of his latter days which were still not without gleams of inner light that broke through at times. At a street corner some of his disciples have placed a medallion of the grim old sage, recording how he lived and died at number thirty-four of this same Cheyne Walk.

And a great block of new, red dwellings towering high, and dwarfing the pleasant old mansions and comfortable houses, bears the name of Carlyle Mansions. There are many fine old houses along the river front. Lindsey House, which, in its altered, divided state, retains the name of its founder, Bertie, Earl of Lindsey.

In one of these houses lived John Martin, the painter. And close by was the cottage, a modest but respectable little dwelling, where a greater artist, Turner, spent the last days of his life, in hiding from his friends—living with burly Mrs. Booth, and generally known in the neighbourhood as Admiral Booth, and supposed to be an old sailor in retirement.

Rossetti, too, lived at sixteen Cheyne Walk. And, indeed, it would be difficult to find any other riverside terrace that has such associations as this famous Cheyne Walk.

And who is Cheyne? it may be asked. Whose name is so honoured?

When a daughter of that famous Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, who fought so stoutly for King Charles in the North, and who wrote a notable book on "Horsemanship," married Charles Cheyne, a man not remarkable in himself, who twinkles feebly as a satellite of the planet Cavendish, she bought out of her dowry the old Palace of Chelsea, and its Manor. The Palace was in Cheyne Walk, a little to the eastward of the Albert Bridge of these latter days, and traces of its garden walls were to be met with thirty or forty years ago behind Cheyne Walk.

But to realise old Chelsea, we must go back to the time when it existed as a riverside village, with church and manor house, as quiet and sequestered as any village could be. The manor belonged originally to the Convent of Westminster, and the manor-house doubtless made a pleasant country-seat for the Abbot when he desired change of air. But in some way or other the place had come into lay hands before the dissolution of monasteries, and Henry the Eighth acquired it honestly enough, and built a riverside Palace there. It is curious to note how fond the Royal Bluebeard was of the river. From Greenwich to Bridewell, from Westminster to Chelsea, again to Richmond, the King might row from palace to palace—and he must needs have Hampton, too, from the wily Cardinal; and then there was lordly Windsor at the head of all. To return to Chelsea, this new Palace was given as a Dowry House to Catherine Parr, and on the King's death, she retired to Chelsea, and soon married the Lord High Admiral Seymour. The Princess Elizabeth came to live with the newly married pair, and Lady Jane Grey, then a child of eleven years, was also an inmate of the Palace. "The weakes be shorter at Chelsey than at other places," wrote Catherine to her husband,

who, however, treated her badly, and was commonly reported to have poisoned her, hoping to marry the Princess Elizabeth when his wife was out of the way.

After the death of Catherine, Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, got possession of the Palace, and after his execution his widowed Duchess was permitted to reside there, and died at Chelsea, and was buried in the church, where her monument is still to be seen. Eventually the Palace was given by Charles the First to the Duke of Hamilton, and was forfeited during the Commonwealth, and, after passing through various hands, was bought, as has been already told, by Lady Jane Cheyne. And if her ladyship is permitted to revisit these glimpses of the moon, and to haunt her favourite walk, she need not want for distinguished company from the old Palace walks.

The old manor-house, superseded by the Palace, was placed nearer the church, and is commemorated in Manor Street, Laurence Street, and probably in Justice Walk. For the manor had its own jurisdiction: with a cage for recusants, and a pair of stocks for minor offenders. And there lived the Laurences, who were originally, perhaps, the King's stewards, but who were the chief family of local importance in Chelsea from the time of Henry the Eighth to 1714, when they disappear, and their house was occupied by the old Duchess of Buccleuch, and Monmouth. Eventually the whole property—manor-house, palace, and manor—came into the hands of Sir Hans Sloane, the celebrated physician, who retired to Chelsea to spend his old age far from the madding crowd. Sir Hans originally intended that his famous collections should be preserved at his own house, the Palace of Chelsea, which thus had a narrow escape of preservation as a museum; but in the end the collections were purchased by the Government and removed to Montague House, now the British Museum, and the old Palace was brought down with a run.

Without some knowledge of the past magnificence of Chelsea and of the tenants of its great houses, it would be puzzling to account for the richness of old Chelsea Church in its tombs and monuments. There is a More Chapel, too, with a Laurence Chapel, and numerous mural monuments in both. And if Sir Thomas More's body actually reposes in the Tower Church, his head is supposed to be buried beneath his fine tomb at Chelsea. Externally, the

old brick church has a quaint and pleasing aspect, with ornate tombs clustered about, adorned with urns and garlands, the whole in good keeping with the old-world aspect of the neighbourhood. Church Street, too, bears the aspect of the humdrum, quiet street of the eighteenth century, not much altered since Dean Swift lodged there one summer.

Another street which bears the same cachet of old times is Danvers Street. "This is Danvers Street," records a florid little plaque built into one of the houses, with the date, 1696. When the street was built—not with its present houses, but their predecessors—Danvers House was still standing: a magnificent house, built by Sir John Danvers, on the site of what was perhaps Lady More's house, allotted to her after her husband's execution, when she was left almost penniless. The entourage of the mansion may be traced in Paulton Square. After Danvers came the Duke of Wharton, and the grounds about were known as Wharton's Park, the memory of which is preserved in Park Chapel, and Park Walk. In 1721, Wharton Park was planted with mulberry trees, and it was intended to work a patent for the production of raw silk with cocoons spun upon the premises. But silk never became a domestic product in Chelsea.

More successful were the potteries—successful, that is, in the beautiful faience they produced, for, commercially, they hardly paid their way. There was something exotic and artificial about their constitution from the first. The Duke of Cumberland, of Culloden fame, was their chief founder, and they began work in the year of his great victory, 1745, and lasted not more than twenty years, as everything connected with the works was sold in 1764, and workmen and patterns transferred to Derby. The kilns were in Laurence Street, at the corner of Justice Walk.

Chelsea's other great product, Chelsea buns, are still to be met with in the neighbourhood; but the whimsical old Bun House, with its fantastical piazzas, which stood in Grosvenor Row, near the river, disappeared in 1839. Vanished, too, has Don Saltero's Museum and Coffee House, where Sir Hans Sloane's servant, one Salter, exercised the crafts of barber and restaurateur, as well as showman. Salter came to Chelsea in 1695, long before his master, Sir Hans, and his house was long a resort of wits and men of fashion, in rustication; and Richard Steele has

described it in one of his papers in the "Tatler."

Just a year before Salter—that is, in 1694—came to Chelsea for its fine air and the repose of solitude, Hortense de Mancini, errant princess, Cardinal Mazarin's niece, and the wife of the Duc de Lamalleraye, with whom she carried on an everlasting "procès." The enormous wealth which her uncle had bequeathed her disappeared between husband and lawyers. And the brilliant De Mancini came to Chelsea rather poor and out at elbows, and seems never to have paid her parish rates. She was glad, too, to share the profits of a Basset table, which a French adventurer established in her salons; and the gay world who dined or supped at her tables were accustomed, it is said, to leave gold or silver coins in their napkins as an acknowledgement for the hospitality they had shared. Her house was in Paradise Row—a name which has been inconsiderately changed to Queen's Road, a road which leads directly from Cheyne Walk to the Hospital.

But before we leave the river terrace, we may remark more emphatically the disappearance of old Battersea Bridge, and the gradual mounting up of its successor, just to note the date of the building of the old wooden pile bridge, A.D. 1771, which has thus seen over a century of traffic to and fro, and has for a similar period vexed the souls of oarsmen shooting its arches, say on a dark night, with a strong ebb tide whirling about the piles.

Away from the river leads the Queen's Road, with a great Cheyne House in red brick buttressing the corner. The policeman standing there, and the costermonger with his barrow farther on, have never heard of Paradise Row, or receive the suggestion that perhaps it is this very street, with anything but credulity and with a slight doubt as to the good faith of the questioner. But there is Paradise Walk. Always there is Paradise Walk, which the authorities of Chelsea have not changed to Queen's Walk, as in consistency they should have done. But what a glimpse of Paradise we gain looking down this walk; the houses small and ancient, with a ferocious kind of gloom about them! If here is Paradise, we will travel in some other direction.

And here the Hospital comes in sight, always comely and pleasant to the eye, with its solid elegance such as Wren could breathe into bricks and stone. Here was

once a college of divinity founded by James the First, which hardly viable from the beginning, came to an end with the Monarchy, and happily was not restored therewith. Charles the Second gave the college to the Royal Society as a kind of endowment of research; but it was only a burden on their hands. And then came Nell Gwynne to Chelsea.

There is nothing prettier, in the not very pretty history of the times of Charles the Second, than the story of Nell Gwynne's dream. How pretty Nell was riding in the King's gilt coach, but very disconsolate and out of spirits; the King rallying her, upon which she confessed that her distress was owing to the following dream:

"Methought I was in the fields at Chelsea, and slowly there rose before my eyes a beautiful palace of a thousand chambers; and in and out thereof walked divers many old and worn-out soldier men with all kinds of wounds and scars, and many maimed as to their limbs. . . . All of them were aged and past service; and as they went out and came in, the old men cried: 'God bless King Charles!' And I awoke, and so sore discomfited, that it was only a dream."

The King was touched with Nell's story, and vowed then and there, with a strong oath, that her dream should be turned to reality. Others were interesting themselves for the poor, worn-out, wounded soldiers, who had no resource but mendicancy for their old age. Sir Stephen Fox, the Paymaster-General, was very active in the matter, and John Evelyn had a hand in it, too; but it was Nell Gwynne who made the project move, which otherwise would have fallen into the limbo of good intentions.

This is not the place, however, to write a history of the Hospital. But as to its outward relations, it is curious to note that on the roof of the Hospital a semaphore station was established in 1793, in communication with the telegraph on the roof of the Admiralty; Chelsea signalling to Wimbledon, and the message carried from height to height till it reached Portsmouth. Another semaphore on the west wing of the Hospital, signalled to the station on One Tree Hill, Hampstead, and so to the eastern coast at Yarmouth. It was but a clumsy method compared with our modern telegraphs, and liable to constant interruption from fogs. At the present day, by the way, how many days in the year is Hamp-

stead Heath visible from Chelsea Hospital? But the old semaphores brought brave news in their day.

There were and are some fine houses about the Hospital—fine in the sense of largeness. Gough House, now the Victoria Hospital, and a house where Sir Robert Walpole lived, and where his elegant wife, the mother of Horace, breathed her last. And on the eastern side of the Hospital, Earl Ranelagh, described by Swift as the vainest old fool he ever saw, had built a fine house surrounded by beautiful gardens. The Earl died and left a daughter and heiress, Lady Catherine Jones, who entertained King George the First at Ranelagh, according to the following notice: "In July, 1717, King George with a large party of his nobility, went to Chelsea in an open barge attended by a band of music, conducted by Handel, who composed his celebrated 'Water Music,' on the occasion."

In 1733, the Ranelagh estate was sold in lots, and bought up for the projected gardens, of which Lacy, the patentee of Drury Lane Theatre, was the chief promoter. The Rotunda was opened 1742, and in 1749, George the Second visited the gardens, accompanied by the principal nobility, forming a grand jubilee fête in the Venetian style.

Another grand regatta was held in June, 1775, attended by the Lord Mayor in his state barge, and all the Royal Princes. There was a perfect fair on both sides of the water as far as Chelsea; every boat on the river was engaged, and music sounded on all sides, with salvos of cannon from the great houses by the river. When the races were over, the whole mass of boats, the Lord Mayor and Royal Princes leading the procession, floated up the river to Ranelagh, where the fashionable world were entertained at a grand supper and masque. Bartolozzi engraved the tickets, and lucky are those whose ancestors preserved their tickets and transmitted them to their descendants.

But with the end of the century, the bright star of Ranelagh declined. It was no longer the mode, although the grounds were sometimes used for fêtes and public breakfasts. The last great function at Ranelagh was a ball of the Knights of the Bath in 1803. And two years after the Rotunda was taken down, and Ranelagh became a thing of the past. And part of its site is now a populous neighbourhood, with a Ranelagh Road passing through as a solitary reminder of

its existence. And that is just behind the great barracks which no doubt occupy part of the old gardens, while railway-sidings and sheds are accountable for the rest.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART II.

CHAPTER V. "MOIS DE MARIE."

ANTOINETTE was very much disappointed that her father did not come home on Saturday. It had flashed across her mind that she might write to him and ask him to do so, but then came the feeling that she could not do this without her stepmother's knowledge, and that her stepmother would think it a very odd proceeding. When she saw the detestable cousin, however, she felt sorry that she had not done it in spite of everything. And she was rather lonely all that evening, while Madame de Montmirail and Captain Percival seemed to talk unceasingly of old recollections, from which she was shut out. To be sure, now and then, the Marquise remembered her manners so far as smilingly to ask her to excuse them, and perhaps, if the Marquis had been at home, he might have enjoyed talking about England as much as they did; but then Antoinette would not have felt lonely.

There was nothing strange or foreign in being alone with her stepmother, as she often happened to be. Celia was generally a very pleasant companion; she had a great power of adapting herself to circumstances, and to the ideas and ways of the country she lived in. Dress, food, religion, manners—everything came easily to Celia, her convictions not being deep on any of these subjects. Achilles, for a man, was inclined to be "dévot," and she humoured him in this, as in everything else. Considering that she was a convert, and not a very zealous one, the way in which she kept up Catholic observances was a credit to the Montmirail family.

But this was a change in Celia for which her cousin Vincent was by no means prepared. He had never idealised her, like Paul Romaine; had never been impressed by her angel look as she listened to a sermon in Woolsborough Cathedral. He was, therefore, a good deal startled when, after dinner on Saturday evening, Pierre

threw open the salon door and announced: "La chapelle est prête."

He and his cousin were sitting in two great brown and gold arm-chairs, talking about England. There was an indefinable something in his way of lounging and talking which offended Mademoiselle Antoinette almost beyond endurance; she sat as far off as possible, her dark, bright head, in the light of the lamp, bent over some hoods for village babies, at which she stitched away hard. She longed for her father; though no doubt he would behave with perfect kindness to this Englishman, still the creature could hardly have things all his own way, if he were there. She remembered a legend of her grandmother, who had once asked a rude man if the house belonged to him. The recollection of that dear grandmother brought up a crowd of old traditions, and deepened the proud resentment with which the young French girl regarded the free-and-easy Englishman.

"He is not agreeable," she thought. "One might forgive him for being badly brought up, if he was agreeable. But he speaks ill of everybody, and sneers at everything, without being clever in the least. He is insupportable."

When Pierre came in with his announcement, she got up, laid down her work, and looked across the room to her stepmother, who smiled a little consciously, and looked at Vincent.

"I thought French people didn't have family prayers!" he said, as he lay back in his chair. He looked from Celia to Antoinette, but she did not look at him.

"Not that exactly, you know—" said Celia, for once a little confused; it was not nice to be laughed at by Vincent, of all people, when she particularly wanted him to feel the superiority of her lot in life and all its arrangements. "It is the 'Mois de Marie.'"

"Oh! really I beg your pardon. I am very ignorant. And must you attend this—this function—yourself? Or can't you stay and talk to me?"

"No, I can't. You had better come too. It will not hurt you," said Celia.

"No, madame, excuse me," he said. "Unless you insist, we will draw the line at the 'Mois de Marie.' Besides, I should be thought a walking profanation."

After this he condescended to get up, and to hold the door open for the ladies, while they threw shawls over their heads and went out to the chapel. He followed

them out of the room, and lighted a cigarette on the terrace, in the warm still starlight. He saw them go under the old archway into the lighted chapel, a few other figures following them. After standing out there a few minutes, he walked slowly and softly to the end of the terrace, and mounted the worn stone-steps, to where a narrow ray of light fell from the low arch of the chapel door; somebody had left it a few inches open. Vincent walked like a cat—it was one of his accomplishments, being as lithe as he was strong—and, standing on the step, was able to look in and listen. The little chapel was very old, older than the rest of the house, with a low, vaulted stone roof, and narrow windows. The carved stone altar glittered with lights in silver candle-sticks; it had a covering of blue silk and lace, and was loaded with flowers, of which large pots stood also all round it on the floor—roses, geraniums, marguerites. On the wall above, hung pictures of saints. In front, a red carpet was laid down, and there was room for about a dozen prie-Dieu chairs, at which the ladies and the servants were kneeling. A sweet young voice was reading the prayers of the "Mois de Marie," very fast, in a high monotone; now and then came a fine growl of responses. It was Antoinette who was reading: Celia knelt silently beside her, with her face hidden.

He went lightly down the steps, and walked off along the terrace. Having pulled himself together, and lighted another cigarette, he wondered very much how Celia could have given herself up to a life of such confounded humbug.

On the whole, the thing put him rather out of temper, and, when the ladies came back into the salon, he was inclined to be silent and sulky. This lasted till about half-past nine, when Mademoiselle Antoinette went away to bed, thus relieving him of what he felt a sort of restraint, for he was conscious of her dislike, and inclined to return it.

Then Celia became industrious, which was a little tiresome. She moved herself into the lamplight, and began working at a large piece of silk embroidery. Certainly she made a very pretty picture, sitting there in a soft circle of light: a more attractive picture, to many eyes, than Antoinette with her hoods. Her cousin, however, sat and stared at her in a discontented sort of way. She was, perhaps, happier than he wished to see her. He

could not quite understand her, or the reason of it all. On the whole, now, he was a good deal fonder of himself than of her—self-love being a plant which richly rewards cultivation—but still she was a most interesting study, and he wanted to ask her a great many questions. He was only checked by the faint instinct that told him she would not like those questions; and even now, perhaps, his curiosity—a form of self-indulgence—might insist on being gratified in spite of any warning instinct.

"Why do you work?" he said, with a touch of impatience. "Can't you do nothing, and talk to me?"

"No; I want to finish this," said Celia, calmly. "You must amuse me. Tell me about India; I can listen."

"I shall do no such thing," he said.

A slight smile lingered about Celia's lips as she bent over her work. Vincent was so utterly unchanged, so ridiculously like his old self. Every word, every frown, every irritable twist in his chair reminded her vividly of that old summer at Woolsborough, when it used to be her business to charm his cross tempers away, and when, without a thought, all through those sunny weeks, of any serious consequence, she used to enjoy the fun of feeling her power over him.

She had not much heart, even then; but in truth she was a better woman then than now. Her way had been down-hill, though her sins had not been very great ones, as the world would see them. But perhaps the inward degradation, the falseness to one's self, the playing with life, and love, and duty, with no better object than outward comfort, and peace, and amusement, may in the end bring down a soul to a very low depth. There may be more hope for people who have been carried away by a madness of passion, and so have forgotten the honour due to themselves, than for a practical, self-preserving, loveless creature like Celia.

She had a little thrill of amused excitement, as she sat there working, and knew that her influence over Vincent was just as strong as ever. He did not know it, but she did; and even while she thought him a fool for his pains, she liked him intensely, and was conscious of a thought which came of itself—and, to do her justice, was not dwelt upon:

"After all, I ought to have married him."

Then she reminded herself of what

she had always known—that he would have been a tyrant. No, it was all for the best; an ill-tempered man would be a terrible bore to live with; and Achille was simply the perfection of a husband. He adored her; and most certainly she was quite contented with him.

"Do you think Antoinette pretty?" she asked presently, with an idea of turning Vincent's thoughts and talk away from herself.

"Yes—rather," he said carelessly. "Very French; too dark. Those sort of eyes and hair are uninteresting—to me, at least. I suppose she is like her father. How old is she—sixteen?"

"She is eighteen," said Celia.

"Really! A stepdaughter nearly as old as yourself. She is very childish for her age. Is that your arrangement?"

Celia laughed.

"Not at all," she said. "It is the way with French girls. But——"

"Married out of the nursery. When is she going to be married? Ah, my manners are very bad. You were saying something."

"I was going to tell you," said Celia, "that she is not like her father at all. Has nobody told you what he is like? It seems so odd that you have never seen him."

"Romaine picked him up first, didn't he? That was very queer," said Vincent; and then he covered this remark with a laugh. "Well, what are the looks of Monsieur le Marquis?—No; nobody told me. I didn't ask."

"Look at that photograph on the table close to you," said Celia.

Vincent snatched up a brass frame, out of which Achille de Montmirail, broad, fair, handsome, the picture of honesty and good-humour, looked him straight in the face with wide-open eyes. He held it in his hand for a minute or two, then put it quietly down.

"He is not much like a Frenchman," he said.

"He is a thorough Frenchman of the best kind," said Celia. "But you Englishmen know nothing whatever about them."

"Very likely not. He is a good-looking man, at any rate."

"When he was quite young, people thought him the handsomest man in France," said the Marquise, with a shade of satisfaction.

"His looks may be called good in another sense, too," said Vincent, not unpleasantly.

"And what his looks are, he is," she said.

"The fact is, Madame la Marquise thinks herself a lucky woman."

"No one will venture to tell her that she is anything else."

"I don't suppose any one will," said Vincent. "There is one thing more certain, though——"

"What may that be?"

"That Monsieur le Marquis is a lucky man. An English beauty, an English heiress—it is not every Frenchman who makes such a catch as that. It entitles him to the everlasting hate of all Englishmen. I should like a war between England and France. I should like to command the regiment that takes your village, and to have the pleasure of looking on while this house is burnt down. Set it on fire myself, perhaps! that would be a grand revenge."

Celia laughed. "Horrid, ungrateful wretch!" she said. "But you would not find it so easy to set this house on fire. The walls are at least two yards thick."

"Oh, it should burn, it should burn," said Vincent, and his eyes ran round the room, as if in search of the most inflammable corner. "Ungrateful, you say! And pray what have I to be grateful for?"

"For a much better dinner than you would have had at River Gate," Celia answered lightly.

"Well, you are right. And I appreciated that, I assure you. Still, even at River Gate, there is a change for the better in the cook line. What a barbarous monster my mother had that summer, do you remember? She could cook nothing but 'rosbif.' Do you still like 'rosbif?'"

"I never liked it," said Celia. "I hate English cookery. Perhaps that was why I married a Frenchman."

"It is the only reason that seems at all reasonable," said her cousin. "If I married a Frenchwoman, I'm afraid it wouldn't answer in the same way. But what a thing, to be sure of a good dinner for the rest of your life! Somehow, Celia, to change the subject, you have not developed as I expected you would."

"Developed! What do you mean?"

"I always thought, that if you could ever do exactly what you pleased, you would turn out rather a dashing sort of woman—if not fast, horsey. I am astonished to find you living quietly in this lonely sort of place, with nobody to amuse you but a girl, and nothing to do but needlework

and devotions. Your adopted country would let you live a much jollier life than that, I know. You might be in Paris, as gay as any one else, and down here you might do anything on earth you pleased. I expected you to meet me to-day at the station in a high cart, driving tandem. Isn't that the sort of thing you would like? Instead of that, you are the pink of propriety in a carriage and pair. Isn't it very slow?"

"Anything for a quiet life," said Celia, smiling over her work.

"So it seems; but do you really think so?"

"I am older, wiser, lazier, than when you knew me, Vincent," she said. "There are lots of people like me; they want to do things when they can't, and they don't do them when they can. Besides, some men are old-fashioned enough to hate all that sort of thing for their wives, and my husband is one of them. So now you know."

"Is it that you won't, or can't?"

"I could, but I don't care to attempt it. I should lose more than I should gain. He and his family are satisfied with me as I am."

"And you like to be admired for a sort of character you don't possess. What an actress you are!"

"And what a cousin you are!" said Celia, with perfect coolness and good-humour. "Suppose we talk about something more interesting."

"Certainly. Have you yet arranged a marriage for M^{rs} Antoinette?"

"Does that interest you? No, indeed, we have not thought about it. Antoinette will not have much fortune, poor child! I am afraid it will be a difficulty."

"Why? she is the only child—at least——"

"Yes," said Celia quickly. "But her father had very little indeed of his own. Just this house, and not much land with it. Her mother's fortune was very small, too; she was one of a large family; it was a foolish marriage. And my money, you know—well, you must understand that I

am quite independent. We married with 'séparation de biens.' Everything I have is entirely my own; and as a good deal of my money has been spent on restoring this house, it is settled on me for my life. Anyhow, a certain part of my husband's property comes to me by law."

"On the whole, a very comfortable arrangement for you," said Vincent, "especially as you are sure to survive him."

Celia looked a little grave. She stooped down to examine the shades in her work, then said, without looking up:

"He is a good many years older than I am; but I hope I shall not survive him. He deserves to live a hundred years."

"You are much more likely to live a hundred years," said Vincent. "One does not quite see why people like you should ever die. I always thought that such a remarkable thing about you—that you should never have had even a finger-ache. You are not going to bed?"

She was putting aside her silks, and rolling up her work with quiet, deliberate movements.

"Yes," she said. "I am sleepy, and so are you, no doubt."

She was again the stately young Marquise who had met him at the station; not the girl who long ago, in the old inn garden by the river, had objected to being told that she knew nothing of pain. She gave him her hand with an air which was not exactly friendliness; it seemed meant to remind him, very gently, that he had his limits, and might as well keep to them; the personal talk he was so fond of might go too far. They were not quite on the old River Gate terms, kind and hospitable as she might be.

He wished her good-night half sulkily. He afterwards reflected that if she chose to give herself airs, he would go away to-morrow; but then curiosity said he must see her husband, this man for whom, with all her coldness, she was certainly a little sensitive.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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"A LEAL LASS."

BY RICHARD ASHE KING.

CHAPTER XXVIII. REPLEDGED.

By the next day's post the Vicar had a letter from Hugh to say that the appearance of his name in the newspapers in connection with Fred's accident had certified an old comrade at once of his existence and of his being in England. That this old comrade, Major Mason, F.R.G.S., being on the eve of starting on an expedition of sport and exploration to the centre of Africa, had telegraphed to ask if Hugh was "fit" and willing to join it, and that he, Hugh, had telegraphed back his assent. As he had his outfit to prepare and little time to get it together, he was compelled to quit Leeds for London that day, and to give up all hope of another visit to the Vicarage.

When the Vicar had read this surprising and disturbing news, he glanced across at May, and seeing her with an unopened letter clutched nervously in her hand, he said nothing. That letter also, he was quite sure, was from Hugh, and May would know the news soon enough without his communicating it to her abruptly and in her mother's hearing.

May, having made a feeble pretence at breakfasting, hurried off to her room to devour her letter in secret. She had the most certain forebodings of its being a final farewell, yet the reading of it was worse than her worst anticipations. The practical details of the when and where and why he was going made her realise his going more intensely. For the rest the letter protested that his life would be

his love for her, and the sweet sorrow of the remembrance of their old days together.

The effect of this letter upon May was like that of the sudden awakening of a somnambulist upon the brink of a precipice. All her reasons for abiding by her engagement—Gower's magnanimity, their deep indebtedness to him, her solemn promise to Fred, her vow as she had considered it—all were as a dream, as she realised that Hugh was lost to her for ever. In truth, the inevitable reaction had set in, and Hugh's letter was rather the occasion than the cause of a revulsion of feeling which, in the present state of her nerves, was overwhelming.

She would telegraph; he might not yet have quitted Leeds; or he might have left, before quitting it, his London address. She seized her hat and put it on, standing mechanically before the glass without seeing anything, and then hurried from her room.

Her father, who was pacing the study to and fro in agitated anxiety about her, hearing her quick step crossing the hall, opened the study-door to intercept her, as it were, accidentally.

"Going out, dear?" he asked, as casually as he could.

"Yes, father," she answered guiltily, and then turned to try, with feverish haste, to open the front door.

When, however, she had opened it, she closed it again impulsively, and turned back to say:

"I was going to telegraph to Hugh, father."

"Yes, dear; come in," he answered, leading the way into the study; when he had closed the door behind them he said again, but interrogatively: "Yes, dear?"

"He's going to Africa and I want to see

him before he goes," she faltered with failing resolution, for a moment before she had made her mind up to confide to her father the proposal and rejection of yesterday, and her reconsideration and repentance of to-day.

"I fear he's gone, dear — to London, I mean; but you can telegraph on chance, or I could take the next train and see him, if he has not gone; and get, perhaps, his London address if he has."

"Yes, that would be better. You might ask him—or take a letter!" she asked, looking up into her father's face with a kind of piteous appeal for discreet and unquestioning assistance, which he understood and responded to.

"Yes, dear; you'll have plenty of time to write, as the next train does not go till 11.30."

She glanced at the clock.

"Perhaps I had better telegraph, too?" she said timidly, for these two hours' interval might make all the difference.

"I will telegraph while you write your letter, dear."

"Thank you, father," she said, putting her arms about his neck, and kissing him with a clinging kiss, which expressed the depth of her relief and gratitude for all that this delicately-proffered service meant to her.

"I shall just telegraph to him not to go till he sees me?" asked he.

"Yes," she replied hesitatively, fearing that this might not be a sufficiently intelligible or effective message.

"Or sees you?"

But May, woman-like, had room in her mind, even at this crisis, for a thought of the Mrs. Grundy of Hammersley—not inadequately represented by the young lady who worked the wires at the post-office.

"I would rather you sent it in your own name, father."

"Very well, dear," he said as he hurried from the room.

Then she returned upstairs to write her letter. Now, she thought with infinite relief, the die is cast; I cannot go back now if I would; therefore, I need not consider anything but my letter—only my letter. And, indeed, she did keep well at bay all yesterday's counter considerations—as considerations no longer; for the matter was decided, and the Rubicon crossed by her father's telegram to Hugh. Therefore, she let loose her whole pent-up heart in this letter to Hugh, without allowing a thought of either Fred or

Gower to divert or obstruct its full flow for a moment. Indeed, for the moment, she was almost possessed, so to say, with Hugh's sole image. She had fought so stubbornly against admitting it within her heart, that her forces of resistance were worn out when it carried the citadel at last, and so it reigned for the time in undisputed possession.

When she had almost finished the letter a knock came to the door, and the nurse entered at May's bidding. The moment May heard the knock she had a misgiving that it was the nurse coming—at this moment of all others—to summon her again, and on a similar errand, to Fred's bedside.

"Well?" she asked, with scared face, pressing her outspread hand upon her letter as though she feared an attempt to snatch it from her.

"Do you know where the Vicar is, miss?" the nurse asked, in a grave voice.

"Why? What's the matter? He's just gone to the post-office. Is anything the matter?" asked May, in sudden alarm.

"The doctor would like to see him, miss."

"He's worse!"

"I don't know that he's worse, miss; he's a bit weaker, his pulse is gone a bit."

May had started up and was now looking with wide eyes of fear and enquiry into the concerned face of the nurse.

"But he was better early this morning."

"He seemed a shade better, but he's lost it, miss, and something more."

May looked at the nurse without seeing her for some seconds, and said then: "I shall see the doctor and ask him to wait. My father will be here in a few minutes now."

"Yes, miss."

When the nurse had left the room May locked up her letter in her desk, with a passing thought of exceeding bitterness that it might never be sent. Having locked it out of sight, she gave all her thoughts to Fred. The nurse's manner was much more serious than her words, and gave the impression of a grave crisis in Fred's condition. Therefore, May was prepared for the doctor's concerned face, and his alarming suggestion that his Leeds colleague should be telegraphed for forthwith.

"There is no immediate danger, my dear young lady—none whatever; but it's a special case of, I may say, public im-

portance, and I feel the responsibility—I feel the responsibility."

In other words, though May fortunately did not so understand him, there might be an inquest, and Dr. Jibblett feared to stand solely responsible in the eye of the world for the fatal termination of a case which seemed—or would seem to outsiders—so simple.

"He appears to have been a good deal agitated both last night and this morning," the doctor continued, looking at the nurse for confirmation, to her obvious embarrassment.

"I was telling the doctor, miss, how he took on about that gentleman who was here. Mrs. Beresford was talking again about him this morning."

"Just so, just so. It would be better, I think, on the whole, to avoid speaking to him on exciting subjects at present," the doctor pronounced, as though deciding between two fairly - balanced eligible alternatives. "However, I should not be prepared to say," continued the doctor, thinking still of a possible inquest, "that the change in him this morning is due altogether to agitation of any kind. It is a serious case, my dear young lady, as we assured you from the first—a very serious case, and he has got on up to this better than we expected. There is a check this morning certainly, but it may be nothing—the slip of a single step back, my dear young lady. Still, it would be more satisfactory to your father, and, may I add, to myself, to have Dr. Leat called in again for consultation."

The little doctor talked on a good deal in the same strain, and to similar effect, with the utmost self-complacency, thinking more of his own eloquence than of its effect upon May. Indeed, he fancied that he had done his work very gently as regards May, and he indemnified himself by speaking much more plainly to the Vicar when he appeared.

Thus it happened that all thought of seeking Hugh in Leeds, and indeed almost all thought of Hugh, was put out of the Vicar's head. The doctor had said to him in almost as many words that Fred was sinking, and the poor Vicar hurried back to the post-office in a frenzy of anxiety to telegraph for Dr. Leat.

Meanwhile Hugh had fallen into the background of May's mind also. From her father's face and manner she could see that Dr. Jibblett had given him even a worse account of Fred than that he had

given her. Beyond a doubt he was in an exceedingly critical condition, if he was not absolutely dying, and she took her place by his bed, with a sense of standing within the very shadow of death.

Of this, however, Fred himself had not an idea. He spoke to May about many things—and his mind wandered quickly with all the discursiveness and inconsequence of weakness, from one thing to another—among other things, he spoke to her with perfect confidence of being up and well in a few days. He was very gentle with her; gentler than she had ever known him to be in all her life, and very grateful to her—a still more singular mood of mind in him. Again and again he recurred to her promise to keep, for his sake, to her engagement to Gower, speaking of it as his salvation, and as the crowning act of her life-long goodness to him.

"It's done more for me than the doctors, Em.; a long way more. I don't believe I should have got better but for it; and I shouldn't have cared to get better either—a poor one-legged beggar, fit for nothing."

Here he rambled away about the cruel ill-luck of such an accident to a fellow like him, just cut out for the stirring life he was starting for in California. From this he wandered with a passing growl to Hugh, and from him he returned, as he did from every subject, to May's goodness of all kinds to him, and especially to this last instance of it. To this he would recur again and again in almost the same words, without any consciousness, seemingly, of his having spoken of it before.

It was no use for May to remonstrate with him for talking so incessantly and incontinently; nothing could stop him. She tried leaving him in the nurse's charge; but he would have neither her nor his mother, but only May, by his bed, while this mood lasted. As a last resource, May ventured to hint that the doctor did not think him so well this morning, and that he had attributed the falling back to the patient's over-exciting himself by too much talking.

"Jibblett's a pompous ass! If talk killed any one he would have been dead ages ago. His notion of doctoring is to serve you with a pint of physic per day—like a milkman. Thundering idiot!" But presently he asked, turning frightened eyes on May: "What did he say?"

"He thought you were a little weaker, dear, that's all."

"Is that what kept him here this morning?"

"Yes," May answered hesitatingly. Then, thinking it better to break Dr. Leat's approaching visit to him, she added: "He's not used, I think, to cases of this kind; so we're going to have Dr. Leat again."

"Jibblett wanted him, do you mean?"

"He thought it as well to have him."

"But he suggested it?"

"Yes; I think, as you say, he doesn't feel easy about cases that don't need medicine; he's not used to them."

Fred, it will be seen, now had his wits more together and concentrated through a sudden excitement. After thinking things over a little, and putting together indications the significance of which had escaped him before, he said:

"He thinks me very ill?" looking at May.

"Not very ill, dear. What he said was, that you had over-excited yourself, and slipped a step back."

Fred turned away his face, and remained for some time perfectly still. Presently he said, with his face still averted:

"Have you sent for the other man?"

"Yes, dear."

After another pause, he turned his head round on the pillow, and said tremulously:

"May, you will tell me what he says?"

"Of course, dear," she answered lightly, resolving mentally not to hear from any one all that the doctor said, if it promised to be alarming.

After another and longer silence, during which he remained so still, with closed eyes, that May hoped he slept, he said falteringly:

"I—I don't want to die, Em.—I'm not fit."

"Fred, dear, you're weak and depressed from over-excitement, and so have got this idea into your head. I do wish, dear, you would try and rest, and you'll be yourself again when the doctor comes."

Without intending it, May had suggested an odd but effective motive for quieting him. Feeling as a man who waits for the verdict, he wished to look and to be his best when the doctor came—as though the doctor's opinion could alter his state either way. He therefore closed his eyes and tried to sleep; but thick-thronging fears and fancies of all kinds kept him excitedly wakeful.

"May, you would like me to get better,

wouldn't you?" he asked eagerly, as one of these fancies flitted through his brain.

"Oh, Fred!"

"Well, I mean that you would feel released from your promise, if I didn't get better, wouldn't you?"

"My promise?" she stammered.

"To marry Gower. You wouldn't feel bound to keep your promise to me to marry him if—if I died?" he asked tremulously.

"Oh, Fred! don't, don't!"

"But would you? Tell me," he persisted, with childish eagerness.

"I would, if you wanted me," she cried desperately.

"Just as much as if I got better?" he continued urgently.

"Yes."

After a pause he said, as if in adequate explanation of all this excited earnestness:

"I want you to wish me to get better, May;" and, indeed, this was the childish idea at the bottom of his mind, to have May's wishes—which meant, he knew, her prayers—with him at this crisis. In an illness that affects the nerves, the mind often becomes as childish, in its weakness, as the body.

May, however, felt that she had pledged herself more solemnly even than before, to keep to her engagement to Gower, under any circumstances.

CHAPTER XXIX. CONFESSION.

DR. LEAT, after careful examination and enquiries, pronounced Fred to be doing fairly well—quite as well as he had expected—and was plainly of an opinion (which professional etiquette prevented him from expressing plainly) that Dr. Jibblett was fussy and foolish in alarming the household.

"What you want," he said cheerily enough to Fred, "is a good mental aperient 'to cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart.' You've been exciting and worrying yourself about something, and the mind is like the stomach, it will give you no peace till you've rid it of what troubles it. Eh?"

To the Vicar he said: "Your son is as unstrung as a fiddle with a broken bridge. All he wants is bracing, which he can get, when he's fit to move, by a month or two at Blackpool, and a course of tonics. And

he'll soon be fit to move, I imagine; probably in another fortnight."

The real patient in the house, apparently, was May; at least, the doctor gave her more of his time and attention than Fred. He had been immensely struck with her beauty upon his first visit, and he was hardly less struck now by the change he perceived in her. Much to her amazement he turned upon her and insisted upon invaliding her. His pleasant peremptoriness and her father's aroused anxiety about her compelled her to lie down at least for some hours—for she had to confess to a racking headache.

Now Fred, being as the doctor said, utterly unstrung, and having his mind wholly prepossessed with the idea of his danger, read everything the wrong way. He was certainly dying. His mother's distress; his father's anxiety; the consultation of the doctors; Dr. Leat's unconsidered quotation about "cleansing the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart;" May's absence under the plea of illness; all were fuel to the fear that consumed him—especially May's absence. What did her sudden illness mean? Simply that she had promised to tell him all the doctor had said, and that the doctor had pronounced him sinking; but had warned them all against destroying any possibility of a rally by informing him of his critical condition. Therefore May, who would hold her promise to him sacred, had to be kept out of the way under this pretext of illness.

Thus it happened that all their reassurances of the doctor's cheerful view of his case failed of their effect upon Fred. He was prepared to discredit them, and he did not dare to question even the nurse particularly, lest he might hear the fatal verdict he feared.

He brooded upon this idea that he was dying till the terror of it, in his utterly unnerved state, overpowered him. As night deepened, this horror of a great impending darkness deepened with it, till he could endure it no longer alone and unsupported. He sent the nurse, in the small hours of the morning, for his father, and when he came, he desired that they should be left alone together. When the nurse had quitted the room, he amazed his father by asking him for those spiritual ministrations which he had doggedly declined up to this.

After the Vicar had read and prayed with him, he talked to him so unaffectedly

and affectionately, that Fred was moved not only to tears—which did not mean much in his state—but to a qualified confession of the follies which had been weighing heavier and yet heavier upon his conscience for the last few hours.

Among the rest, he told the whole story of the forgery in a curiously modified form, making out that Gower was himself somehow partly to blame for it. When he came to his account of the pressure put by himself and Gower upon May, he took care that his friend should cut at least as poor a figure as he deserved to make in the transaction. He had a vague, illogical, but perfectly human feeling that he somehow raised himself by reducing Gower to his level. As for the suppressions and modifications of a confession which he thought was being made on his death-bed, and which he professed was being made without reserve, these also were thoroughly human. There are not many confessions made, even at the foot of the gallows, wherein something is not held back or misrepresented.

To return, however, to Fred and his confession, he mentioned in it incidentally the promise he had extorted from May to keep to her engagement, and begged his father to let her know that he absolved her from it.

"You can tell her yourself to-morrow, Fred."

"To-morrow!" he faltered, turning a look like that of a hunted creature upon his father. "I don't think I shall live till to-morrow."

His father's reassurances on this point he answered only by a gloomy shake of the head, when the Vicar quoted what the doctor had said, to which Fred objected that, if the doctor had spoken so favourably—or favourably at all—of his case, May would not have kept out of the way. She had promised to report to him all the doctor had said, and, because she found that she dare not tell him all, she had pretended to be ill.

"I assure you, Fred," his father said earnestly, "the doctor thought her looking so ill that he insisted upon her going to bed. Well," he added, seeing Fred to be still unconvinced, "she shall speak for herself." When he got to the door he paused and returned to say: "I shouldn't disturb her if I were not sure that both you and she will be the better for seeing each other. She will tell you exactly what I have told you as to Dr. Leat's opinion, and you will

make her as happy by absolving her from that promise."

As he looked for some assent, Fred nodded, and, after his father's departure, he kept his eyes fixed feverishly upon the door.

It was not long before May appeared hurrying in in her dressing-gown—her very air of eager cheerfulness assuring Fred of his reprieve.

"He doesn't think you in any danger at all, Fred," she cried, as she neared the bed. On reaching it, she stooped to kiss him effusively, and continued, "He said I was the real patient; as for you, you're to be in Blackpool in a fortnight, and as well as ever you were in a month, really," she added, nodding emphatically.

Fred drew a long breath of relief.

"I thought you kept away because of your promise, Em. I knew you would keep it." Then he proceeded to speak of her other promise, not only absolving her from it but explaining why he absolved her. He said that on serious second thoughts he was convinced that Gower was unworthy of her, and would not make her happy! In fact, he resumed at once his character of a magnanimous brother, feeling quite secure of his father's keeping his confession secret—by request, which would be made to-night, or early to-morrow.

As it turned out, however, the Vicar declined altogether to allow May to continue in the belief of Mr. Gower's magnanimity.

"Your sister's happiness should be your first thought, and she will be miserable in the belief that she has behaved badly to such a man as she imagines him to be."

As Fred in his confession had minimised to insignificance the part he himself had played in tricking May into the engagement, he could not now urge that to unmask Gower was to unmask himself, to May. Wherefore, he was reduced to sullen silence, and to secret and bitter repentance of his confession.

Thus all was made right to every one, except to Fred—whose remorse for his maudlin penitence made him morose and unapproachable for weeks—and to Gower, who revenged himself for May's abominable ill-usage of him in the way Fred had feared he would—by informing the Vicar of the forgery.

The Vicar's first telegram to Hugh did not reach him, but another, addressed to him, "care of Secretary, R. G. S.," brought

him back to the Vicarage within a few hours; and he found "golden joys" nearer than Africa.

Intense was the excitement in Hammeraley on its being noised abroad that Miss May was engaged again. Engaged to two men within almost as few weeks!

On her first appearance in the parish after the report had been spread and confirmed, she was waylaid by a knot of old ladies, who greeted her in the following engaging fashion, without, however, the slightest intention of offence:

"Eh, Miss May! Yo've gi'en yon barrowknight t' sack, an' takken t' other i' his place, they tell me. Weel, aw hope thee's fitted this time, lass. Thee'd hardly tried t' other 'un on, aw reckon."

"Happen, sho'd heeard he wadn't wash," suggested another facetiously.

"But he'd coomed in for a mort o' brass, hadn't he, miss?" asked a third, who plainly thought all such explanations of Gower's rejection inadequate in face of this overpowering consideration.

"You know nothing whatever about it," May said good-humouredly, too happy to be hurt, "and I'm not going to tell you anything about it either," she added laughing, and nodding a parting salute.

But in escaping Scylla she struck upon Charybdis, for, a few steps further on, she was arrested by Miss Hick's frenzied tapping at the window. Miss Hick could hardly have been more highly elated if bigamy had been brought home to Mr. Spratt.

"Which is it, my dear? Which is it!" she gasped the moment May entered the room.

"It's Mr. Grey at present," May answering smiling. She thought it best to take the bull by the horns; and, indeed, there was no other possible way of foiling Miss Hick.

"At present!" exclaimed the old lady, hardly believing her own ears.

May nodded.

"If you mean my engagement, Miss Hick."

Miss Hick gazed at her in speechless amazement.

"It's some joke," she was able to say at last.

"It's not, indeed, Miss Hick. I'm engaged to Mr. Grey, and I mean to bring him soon to see you and receive your congratulations."

"May, you accepted him in a huff. You had some quarrel with Mr. Gower, and

Mr. Grey came just in the nick of time, and you took him to spite the other. Didn't you now?" she asked triumphantly.

May put her finger mysteriously to her lips.

"Hush! You mustn't tell. I daren't bring him to see you if you tell tales," she said smiling with almost paralyzing coolness.

The poor old lady was utterly bewildered, and was tormented with such a thirst of curiosity that she called in Con in the evening, as he passed her window on his return from his work. It was not by any means the first time that she had pumped what she took for valuable Vicarage news out of this guileless and garrulous creature.

"Good evening, O'Neil."

"Good evening kindly, miss, an' I hope it's betther I see you."

"I'm very well, thank you. And so you're going to have a wedding at the Vicarage, O'Neil?"

"So I undhershtand, miss. There isn't many wid your sence, miss, to know whin they're well off—there isn't so."

"But Miss May is going to be very well off from all I hear."

"More of that soart to her, miss."

"But he's a good match, isn't he, O'Neil? Better than Mr. Gower—or Sir George Gower, I should say now?"

"Sorra a wan of me knows, miss."

"But why did she give him up then?"

"Ay, there it is, miss."

"They say there was a quarrel. You didn't hear anything of it, O'Neil?"

"Sorra a wordd, miss."

"Some say she was engaged when she was a child to this Mr. Grey, who was supposed to be dead."

"See that now!" Con cried as a note of admiration.

"But what do they say at the Vicarage, O'Neil?"

"Ah, shure, miss, they hears nothin' up at the Vicarage," Con answered with an air of the most perfect innocence, suggesting that the Vicarage was the last place from which to get news of this kind.

"But they talk freely to an old servant like you, O'Neil," rejoined Miss Hick coaxingly, for she had no suspicion of the sarcasm of Con's suggestion.

"That's what the Vicar says. 'Con,' he says, 'I tell you anything,' he says, 'because you tells no wan nothin'.' 'Arrah thin, yere rivrence,' I says, 'there's no one wan to tell nothin' to in this place,' I says, 't-r, begorra, they knows every-

thing about ye afore ye know it yerself,' I says. An' that's as thrue as ye're sittin' there, miss," Con added, looking solemnly at Miss Hick, as though she could hardly be expected to credit such gossipmongering. Then rising suddenly—for Miss Hick had insisted on his seating himself—he said with an abrupt change of tone to one of concentrated sarcastic bitterness:

"Good night, mi-s, an' thank ye," and without another word he quitted the room and the house.

Not until after he had been gone some time did it dawn upon Miss Hick, that his thanks were ironically intended for the news she had imparted to him; and that he had been audaciously sarcastic throughout the interview. In fact, Con, being furious at the freedom taken with May's name in Hammerley, was glad to relieve himself of this bit of wholesome sarcasm, which the old lady might digest at her leisure.

In spite, however, of Con's discretion, it got out through another Vicarage servant, that May's engagement to Gower was the price of Fred's extrication at Gower's expense from some horrible scrape; and that Fred's confession, upon what he thought to be his death-bed, of this scrape to his father, had freed May honourably from the insupportable entanglement. Mrs. Beresford, who next to Fred himself was most interested in keeping the secret, had most to do with divulging it, through such indiscreet and reiterated defence of Fred (in the servant's hearing), as suggested bit by bit the whole story.

Fred, however, affected to believe Hugh the informer, and his incessant sneers at the man who had saved his life at the risk of his own almost completely disenchanted May with her once idolised brother.

Hugh, on the other hand, crowned Fred's detestation of him by providing a livelihood for the life he had saved. He succeeded, through his influence with some friends abroad, in securing Fred a lucrative agency.

It needs a magnanimous man to be grateful for magnanimity, whereas Fred was below even that level of human nature which repays with hatred benefits it cannot repay in kind.

Mrs. Beresford became reconciled to the loss of the Gower title and estates through the reports that reached her, from time to time, of the vicious excesses and wild extravagances of Sir Augustus Gower, who took—among other follies—to theatre-

managing, and married eventually the saucy "soubrette" of his farces—a marriage which turned out excellently.

Hugh settled down contentedly, after the manner of so many adventurous youths, to the uneventful life of a country gentleman. He was a keen sportsman, a headlong hunter, and, above all—in his own estimation—his wife's husband.

He had an unshaken belief in May's literary genius, who, he thought, would certainly have astonished the world with fiction as good as George Eliot's, or with poetry as good as Mrs. Browning's, if she had not given up to her husband and children what was meant for mankind.

May's better-grounded reverence for the rough virtues of his manliness was not less settled and profound. Their chief quarrels were about their boys, whom Hugh, oddly enough, would have kept to their books, when May wished them in the woods with their father. They had their quarrels and their troubles, of course, but love survived them, and drew from them increased sweetness, as the sun draws a richer incense from the flowers while wet with the tears of a passing storm.

READING AND ITS BISCUITS.

As the train slackens speed on approaching Reading—the Great Western down train that is—you may gain a momentary glimpse of the environments of the place, such a scene as the traveller of old along the western road might have enjoyed in more leisurely fashion. Here are beautiful green meadows; there the River Thames winds in silvery folds; a cluster of roofs and spires rises from the green plain; hills show beyond in hazy distance, suggesting the approach to a land differing somewhat from the great metropolitan area with which we are familiar; the land of the West, indeed, of which Reading may be regarded as the frontier town. Then we get a nearer view of the town, its works, and public buildings, its grey old church towers, and bright new stores and shops, as the train glides into the station.

A few centuries ago, the first view of Reading would perhaps from a distance have been more imposing. The minster tower of its great abbey would have dominated the scene, with halls and cloisters adjoining, with embattled gates and massive walls. Then should we have heard bells chiming continually from abbey,

from friary, from church and guild chapel. In the narrow streets, with the tall timber houses in overhanging stages almost shutting out the light of day, we might have met some stately pageant from the abbey walls; the Abbot in his glittering cope, preceded by the great processional cross, and followed by the stately Benedictine fathers. Or it might be some procession of the guilds, with jolly clothiers and dignified merchants walking behind their banners. Or, crossing over the high-arched bridge, we might have met a train of pack-horses from the West Country, laden with wool and cloth for the halls and markets of London.

Then you might have seen along the strand of the sparkling Kennet, women with tubs and baskets, beating clothes and whitening linen in the running stream. It may be that the King is at the abbey, and that the Royal linen is bleaching in the river, for His Majesty is often at the abbey in his progresses, and the great banqueting hall is the scene of Royal feasts, of councils, and even of Parliaments.

But the grand yet sombre features of other days are replaced by the cheerful briskness of the present. Instead of monks and friars we have the Board School children in procession, and children's voices and the songs they sing in unison, replace the echoing drone of long-drawn anthems. For to-day everything is modern about Reading. Brisk, clean, and flourishing, the town has regained all, and something more, of its ancient prosperity. In summer, the surrounding fields are carpeted in rainbow colours, with myriads of flowers, which bloom not unseen, nor merely to decay, but to furnish seeds, destined to make bright the gardens of great London, and other parts remote and near. More homely, too, but with the beauty of utility, are the wide plantations of the vegetables of the market-gardener and agriculturalist, which blossom, too, after their fashion, and transmit their virtues, enhanced by a judicious selection, to a future race of bigger cabbages, of more prolific beans, of turnips wider in girth, of potatoes more floury and better flavoured.

But, great as it is in seeds, Reading has a still more important product, which has carried its name and fame all over the round world. It is the biscuit that gives the place its pre-eminence—the toothsome, useful, always acceptable, and with pleasure-

to-be-munched, biscuit. English biscuits everywhere carry the palm; even the French, who are apt to plume themselves upon superiority in all things edible, confess that our biscuits are not to be beaten; and of English biscuits Reading is the chiefest and most famous fount.

When you have once reached Reading, it is not hard to find the great biscuit factory. "Indade, ye can't miss it," says an Irish labourer, who is at work with a barrow and a broom, sweeping up and making tidy, where already everything seems tolerably neat and clean. But to make sure, the friendly Irishman leaves his barrow and broom to work by themselves for a few moments, while he leads the way to a point where the buildings are unmistakably in evidence, the rows of square chimneys, the clustered roofs, the tall, round columns, which are to the other chimneys as the high towers of the abbey were to the pinnacles about its roofs.

Yet, when you have reached the works, you are not there altogether. A wide gateway opens; but that is not the way in; a river is crossed, the Kennet, flowing tranquilly as a canal with a barge or two lying moored to some quiet wharf. The river disappears, is swallowed up as it were in the biscuit factory; bridged across and arched over, with covered roofs and flying passages leading to and fro. Then there is another gateway; and that is also closed to strangers. Still you may be sure you are on the right track. For there rises a slight fume from the rows of lesser chimneys which spreads abroad with a flavour of the spice islands, with a grateful incense, as of the baking-day of youth, when all kinds of cakes were in preparation for some household feast. And so, soothed by pleasant odours, you pursue your way, till, finally passing into another street in what seems to be quite a different quarter of the town, there you are—at the door of the chief offices.

When you see counting-houses and private offices stretching out into the distance, with an array of busy clerks, and telephone boxes, and telegraphic machines, and other devices for saving time and labour, you begin to realise the importance of the biscuit, and of its manufacture as carried on at Reading.

Fifty years ago there were biscuits, no doubt, and of sorts. The great Abernethy had bequeathed his biscuit to dyspeptic humanity; there were captain's biscuits and ship's biscuit, and if you turn to the

volume of the "Penny Magazine" for 1840, you will find a description of biscuit making by machinery; of biscuits for the Royal Navy, that is, which was carried on at Gosport. Then, too, as now, certain towns had a reputation for certain choice morsels in the way of cakes, or ginger-bread. But the business was altogether local and trifling; a branch of the confectioner's art and nothing more. Now the biscuit is universal. The square tins are seen piled in every shop that deals in comestibles, whether in town or country; and, in spite of hostile tariffs and national prejudices, it finds its way to every part of the world. Thus the biscuit works at Reading have grown with time and opportunity; the marvellous improvements in means of communication; the growth of the mechanic arts have brought about an equal growth and improvement in this particular manufacture.

Still the earlier methods are not entirely superseded; and that we may realise the difference between new and old, we are first introduced into the older factory, where the machinery and processes are the most simple. Here is a long range of ovens—the regular old-fashioned bakers' ovens heated directly from the flues—charged with their proper batches of cakes and biscuits, and then closed till the baking is completed. Here, too, is a man at work with a rolling-pin, and youths are cutting out biscuits with a shape, while the savour of the baking and the handsome appearance of the results, leave nothing to be desired. Here the machinery is confined to the kneading process. Above are the mixing rooms, and down a metal funnel are poured into the machines the materials of each batch carefully weighed and supplied according to formulas, the efficiency of which have been tested by long experience. Then the knives and beaters do their work, and presently the dough is turned out in one uniform homogeneous mass.

But a few steps further bring us into a scene of stir and activity, as if we had cleared a quarter of a century at a bound. Shafts are whirling overhead, and wheels revolving in all directions; huge cylinders are silently rolling round; and on all sides radiate long vistas of machinery—everywhere whirling wheels and swiftly-moving bands. The ways among this labyrinth of machinery are so many tramways laid with grooved rails, along which trucks are rolling to and fro, loaded with all kinds of

biscuit ware. And now you may watch the biscuit travelling through its various stages, the biscuit of the period, untouched by human hands, only watched and occasionally directed, as it passes without haste, but without much leisure for reflection, along its allotted path. First there are the materials pouring down from the mixing-room, and speedily converted into dough by the remorseless arms of bright and polished machinery. Then the mass of dough passes under one huge cylinder, and assumes the form of a massive sheet—of a blanket rather of portentous thickness. But it travels on, and another roller stretches it out and smooths it down. Backwards and forwards it passes, doubled and folded and squeezed again into tenuity, is gauged and measured, and passes out of the exact thickness or thinness required, whether that of a wafer, or of a portly “captain.” The sheet of dough, which is as soft and clean as a sheet of paper just reeled off the machine, does not enjoy much respite before it reaches another stage in its progress.

It is impossible to help seeing analogies in this biscuit manufacture to other mechanical processes, and this next stage suggests strongly cylinder printing. Only the biscuit machine seems even cleverer than the printing machine. For with the latter, the sheet of paper you put in comes out still a sheet of paper, although covered with characters. But the biscuit machine takes the sheet of dough, cuts it into circles, perforates each with the holes appropriate to biscuits, imprints the name of the biscuit and the name of the manufacturer, and finally delivers the biscuit—complete, except for the “cuit”—in sets upon tins perforated or otherwise; but, anyhow, upon proper baking-tins ready to be popped into the oven.

This question of the oven, by the way, was a difficulty in the early days of the manufacture. It is discussed in the number of the “Penny Magazine” already alluded to. The biscuits first placed in the oven naturally got the most baking, and by the time the oven was filled the first might be ready to come out before the later arrivals were hot. The master-baker of the Government factory cunningly met this professional crux by making the earlier biscuits thicker, and gradually diminishing the rest. But this would not do for the modern manufacturer; each biscuit is the exact fellow of the rest, in size, and hue, and form, and perfect

uniformity in the baking process is secured by the hot air ovens to which we are now introduced. There are no wide-opening doors, breathing forth scorching heat; no roaring furnaces; no half-naked perspiring men alternately shovelling and stoking, as in the ovens of old times. There is plenty of heat, indeed; but it is mostly confined to the interior of the long and square tabernacle of white brickwork that forms one of a row of many similar structures occupying the floor of what may be called the Hall of Ovens. In the face of the tabernacle appears a long and narrow horizontal opening, like the slit of a gigantic letter-box, or, rather, a series of such slits, in front of which revolves a cylinder that gives motion to an endless band. The band travels continuously into the interior of the tabernacle, by way of the slit, bearing upon it the contents of the trays of biscuits, not yet “cuited,” which have just been delivered from the cutting, stamping, and pricking-machine close by.

There they go in endless procession, these biscuits of the future, their walk being regulated to a nicety as well as the temperature of the hot-air chamber through which they pass. Thus, by the time we reach the other end of the tabernacle, the circles of dough, whose progress we watched just now, are dropping out in an endless shower from their endless band, all brown, a golden, straw-coloured brown, crisp and fragrant, and each one the moral of the other, as far as unprofessional eyes can judge. It is like the shower of letters seen from the inner side of the great slits of the General Post Office, only the shower is more regular, and never ends in the tornado or tempest that heralds the approach of closing time for letter-boxes. Like the letters, too, in the post office, the biscuits, as the receptacles into which they fall are filled up, are hurried away to the sorting-rooms, where they are weighed, inspected, and finally packed into tins.

So we may see the produce of many dozens of ovens whirling along into their final stages; they come loaded up on trucks, and roaring along the miniature tram lines; they fly upwards in lifts; they are whirled aloft in what may be called the overhead skyline. Here a pair of tall cages are hurrying from a wire rope, and receive the train of trucks piled high with trays of biscuits and cakes. A signal is given, and away goes the load, swinging high overhead like a tight-rope dancer taking his perilous walk head downwards. Half-way

up the train meets a couple of cages on the downward grade, charged with empty trays. But there is no danger of a collision; and while one set deposits its load softly on the floor, the other disappears among the galleries and chambers of the upper regions.

As you may suppose, there are many kinds of biscuits whose shape and structure do not fit them for production by the cylinder machines.

Here are rows of shining barrels like those of machine guns, from which, however, issue no deadly missiles, but, instead, a continuous volley of crinkled paste, which is cut into lengths by gauge and mould, and then dismissed in the direction of the ovens.

Other makes are done in moulds; there are alphabetical biscuits by whose aid the child may learn and then digest its lesson, the most pleasant of all the roads to knowledge; there are zoological biscuits, too, dogs, and cats, lions, elephants, and kangaroos, all to be pleasantly crunched, whether carnivorous or herbivorous; also the universal *nic nacs* which might serve as small change if an international biscuit currency were once established.

But there are some two hundred and fifty different biscuits in general use; and most people have their own particular favourites. Still there are biscuits that have won and retained the general suffrage, and are baked in their hundreds of thousands to the others' tens; and these are mostly of the plainer sorts—the Osborne, the lunch, the biscuit of middle-age as it were; while the mixed and fancy biscuits, the sweet and sugared ones, are the delight of youth.

And what about gingerbread, which holds a position half-way between the utile and the dulce? We may own to a weakness for ginger-nuts, the taste of which brings to memory the jolly country fairs of the old days, with the turmoil, the laughter, the booths and shows, with clown and pantaloons, the cavaliers in russet boots and feathered hats, and the lovely houris in tinselled skirts who strutted to and fro upon the stage.

The 'ginger-nuts of the fair were often deficient in flavour and far from being of nutty crispness. They make them better now, and it is interesting to see how it is done. There is an enormous metal bowl revolving briskly on its axis, and the ingredients are rolled and compounded by a bright, revolving, metal cylinder within.

A man, wielding a great, wooden shovel, stands by the brink, and assists the amalgamating process. He is one of the veterans of the establishment, but he wields his shovel with all the vigour of youth, combined with the dexterity of long practice.

Another form of biscuit takes a peculiar development. This is the cracknel in all its various forms, with its brown and polished surface, and snowy, mealy interior. This result is obtained by boiling the biscuits first, and then baking them. The boiling house is an apartment to itself, with a huge cauldron of water bubbling and leaping from the effects of a powerful jet of steam which is driven through it.

A truck-load of biscuits, in the form of paste, is thrown into the cauldron; they disappear; they are altogether lost to sight in the torrid depths. The experiment has failed you think, the biscuits are boiled to a pulp perhaps, and will never more be seen. Then, suddenly, and almost simultaneously, like a shoal of fish, they dart glittering to the surface. There is one at hand with a fishing-net, a regular landing-net of reticulated wire. It is fishing in troubled waters, and the biscuits dart about as if possessed of life. But he brings them dexterously to bank like so many shining roach or glittering bleak, and drops his catch gently into a reservoir of cold water by his side.

And then they rest for a moment, poised on the surface of the water, and then drop like stones to the bottom. After these violent experiences they are ranged once more on trays, and pass through the ordeal of fire in the ovens, coming forth the light and elastic biscuit we all know so well.

After these experiences we may wander through the rooms where the biscuits are sorted and made up. And here we are reminded of the Mint—for a biscuit, one of Huntley and Palmers' biscuits, is like a sovereign. It must be perfect in shape and colour, and true to standard. Too brown, or too pale, or in any way defective in form, the biscuit is rejected and thrown on one side. These rejected are broken up and sold as fragments. Then there is the filling of the tins, the weighing, the labelling. When the biscuit is fairly finished, when it has passed the standard, and is ranked with its myriads of other comrades, there are three principal ways, in either of which its destination may lie. There is the Home Department, store-rooms filled with the square tins that are so well known

all over the United Kingdom. There is the Continental Department, with labels and packages varied, to suit the tastes of the European world. And there is the Export Branch, where the tins are of a different shape and differently handled, for they are all soldered up and hermetically closed, so that they may cross the line and visit the tropics, or travel into furthest India, or visit Tokio or Peking, without fear of deterioration. To every part of the world indeed the biscuits of Reading find their way.

The stencil-plates that line the sides of the export store-rooms, would furnish a lesson in geography, and a skilled examiner might himself be posed in the process.

Then the packing chests, as may be imagined, are the subject of a considerable industry. There are carpenters' shops, where boxes are turned out by truck loads; there is a cooperage for casks. There is also an engineer's shop, where the machinery used in the works is put together and repaired. There is a big sugar store, with mills for grinding sugar, and engine-rooms where bright and beautiful engines are at work, which furnish power for the whole machinery. And to see the flour stores!—great rooms with perhaps a thousand sacks of flour in sight, with floor over floor above, supported on the stoutest of iron columns. Merrily must whirl the mill wheel about Reading, for the sacks we notice are of local millers; and how much of local prosperity and general well-being is due to such a famous and flourishing industry, the amazing success of which is chiefly owing to thorough excellence and honesty of manufacture.

And now we have reached the last stage of all. The biscuit is about to start on its travels. A roomy store-house is well filled with boxes and cases of every description, some marked with devices in the way of diamonds and stars, and mysterious initials, which stevedores and ship officers know the secret of; others bear the address of well-known English towns. Through the middle of the store-house runs a railway siding, and a small train of trucks—full-sized trucks these, of the massive English pattern—are waiting to be loaded. A couple of locomotives are puffing in the distance, shunting and bumping about other trucks, which are in the business too, only in some other department. Assuredly the place is big, and a walk all round is something of a pedestrian feat. Fourteen acres laid out in buildings, with passages to and

fro, staircases and ladders to climb, and bridges to negotiate; all this measured out forms a pretty good exercise ground. And then there is the continual clatter and whirl of machinery.

You might also expect that there would be dust, that you would leave the works as white as a miller. But this is not the case. You, sir, may come in your finest broad-cloth; and you, madame, in your best velvet bonnet, and your garments will be none the worse for your visit. The ventilation must be excellent, as there is no dust, neither is there excessive heat. The faces about are healthy country faces. And there are a good many faces too—some four thousand or so, had we seen them all. And female faces among them? Oh, yes, there is a fair amount of female labour employed, although not to the same extent as in some other manufactures; but in a department to itself, and employed in light work—wrapping up cakes for instance.

And the cake department, with its quietude and pleasant fragrance and the sight of all kinds of good things, is quite a rest and refreshment in contrast with the bustle we have passed through. The wholesale manufacture of cakes is a departure comparatively modern. People baked their cakes at home—sometimes with terrible results—or they ordered them of the confectioner a day or two beforehand. Now you send to the nearest shop for one of Huntley and Palmers', and will not, perhaps, regret the changes that time has wrought. There are all kinds of cakes in squadrons, being wrapped up in silver or lead paper, and arranged with a certain eye to effect, by the agile fingers of womankind. Here are school cakes and Eton cakes, cakes of Genoa, of Savoy, of Madeira, cakes of every description you ever heard of, and a good many that you never did hear of before. They are all on the march to be distributed throughout the country, to be packed in school-boys' boxes, to figure at cosy tea-tables, to visit alike the homes of rich and poor, to crown the banquet of Lucullus, and make a feast of delight for the humble sempstress.

But now the dinner bell is ringing, and hundreds of employés are hurrying away to their homes for the midday meal. There are many pleasant rows of small houses which are tenanted almost exclusively by the workmen of the biscuit factory; and many comfortable households and pleasant homes have been es-

tablished about the factory, and owe their comforts to it. Then there are numbers of young people and others who take their meals on the premises, where a room is provided for the purpose.

There is a reading-room also and a library within the works, and there is always accessible the excellent free library and reading-room established within the public buildings.

For summer evenings and holidays there is an excellent cricket club—one of the strongest of its class. Then there are pleasant public gardens close by, which are free to all, with a curious mount called the Forbury, once enclosed within the abbey precincts.

The Forbury is crowned with ancient elms; a Sebastopol gun stands sentinel on its summit; a Royal oak, planted on the Prince of Wales's marriage day, may be a fine young tree a hundred years hence; and you have a glimpse in the gardens beneath of the lion of Mainwand, in memory of the men of the Berkshire Regiment who fell in that disastrous battle. From the hill you get a pleasant view of the river valley where the Kennet, wandering in devious channels, unites at last and flows into Thamesis.

The abbey ruins are at hand—shapeless masses of grouted flints, and yet, formless as they are, imposing a certain sense of grandeur from their strength and thickness. After the abbey fell, the buildings were used as a palace. Queen Elizabeth came here often. She had her own seat, her State pew, with a canopy over, in the Church of St. Laurence—the church whose square tower, with its four comely pinnacles, rises close by. Then the place fell out of repair and was abandoned, its walls being used as a quarry by all the country round. It may have been damaged somewhat by the guns of Lord Essex and the Parliament forces, who besieged and captured the place during the Civil Wars. It was never a walled town; but there were palisadoes, ditches, and breastworks, and there was much cannonading and skirmishing with alarums, sorties, and surprises, till the King's forces were allowed to march out with the honours of war, and join their Royal master at Oxford.

There are many ancient memories, indeed, connected with Reading, the train of which might be pleasantly followed; but our business is rather with the Reading of to-day—the spirited modern town, with a High Street and Market Place which still

suggest a flavour of the quiet old market town of other days. But what would the old farmers, and maltsters, and millers of other days have said over their ale and pipes could they have seen the fine public buildings of to-day: the Town Hall—the new Town Hall—handsome and well proportioned, with a fine organ, and of almost perfect acoustic properties; the Museum, with its collections of art, and antiquity, and a promising collection of local relics. The Free Library and Reading Room have already been mentioned; they are in the same pile of buildings, cheerful, handsome rooms, where everything seems to be arranged in the most admirable way. And there is a constant stream of people moving about and a general cheerful air of intelligence and progress. Reading is clearly flourishing, and long may she so continue.

SOME SLANG PHRASES.

THE great bulk of common words, that is, words in everyday ordinary use, may be regarded as consisting of two classes, the colloquial and the literary. No hard and fast line can be drawn, separating one class from the other; but, roughly speaking, the division is sufficiently accurate. Attached to the colloquial section of the language are two important but ill-defined tributary classes of words; the larger is known as slang, while the smaller consists of dialectal forms and modes of speech. Interesting as both these classes are philologically, there are yet many other points of interest and instruction—historical and antiquarian—presented to the view of the student, and more especially in the case of slang and familiar words and phrases.

One of the oldest of our popular expressions is “by hook or by crook.” A variety of guesses, some extremely wild, have been made at the origin of the phrase. One connects it with the names of two judges in the time of Charles the First, named Hooke and Crooke; the idea being that what was lost by the ruling of the one might be gained by the decision of the other. But, unfortunately for this theory, the phrase is much older than Stuart times. Archbishop Parker, writing to Sir William Cecil in 1566, says of a certain Dr. Caius, that his pupils intended “to win him in time, by hook or crook, the master's room”; and two centuries earlier than this the expression occurs in the writings of Wiclif. The most pro-

bable explanation traces the origin of "hook or crook" to the old forest custom, in virtue of which the tenants of a feudal lord had the right of taking "fire-bote," or wood for firing, by hook and by crook. What could not be gathered with the hook might be reached and pulled down with the crook.

Another ancient expression, still occasionally used, is to "dine with Duke Humphrey," or, as it is now sometimes more shortly phrased, to "dine out," in both cases meaning not to dine at all. The old Cathedral of St. Paul's was in times past the regular meeting-place for business and for pleasure of the citizens. Within the professedly sacred walls traders met to bargain and to deal, gallants strutted up and down the centre aisle to exhibit the bravery of their apparel, advertisements were exhibited, servants hired, and assignments made. When the dinner hour came, the throng of business men and gay idlers speedily melted away until only the unfortunate ones, who had not the price of a dinner, remained, to walk out the interval and enjoy a Barmecide's feast, in the body of the church, where, it was mistakenly supposed, lay buried the bones of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, youngest son of Henry the Fourth, famous for his hospitality, and known as the good Duke Humphrey. Nashe, in "Pierce Penilease," 1592, says, "I retired me to Paules, to seeke my dinner with Duke Humfrey." Dr. William Chambers, in his "Historical Sketch of St. Giles's Cathedral," Edinburgh, says that a similar pleasantry prevailed concerning the tomb of the Earl of Murray in that ancient building, and he quotes a minor Scotch poet named Sempill, who makes a hungry, penniless idler say :

I dined with saints and gentlemen,
E'en sweet Saint Giles and the Earl of Murray.

The adjective "Dutch," by what seems a somewhat curious caprice of popular taste, is used in a variety of common phrases, to denote something inferior, or to some extent contemptible. A "Dutch concert" is one wherein each man sings his own song, or each performer plays his own tune, at the same time that his comrades sing or play theirs. Scott uses the term in "Waverley," in describing the boisterous revelling that led up to the famous affray in Luckie Macleary's change-house. "Dutch courage," perhaps, refers in part to the "Hollands" which so often inspired the potvalour so characterised ; but it is also, no

doubt, like other of these phrases, a witness to the long-standing hatred and enmity between the English and the Dutch.

The Dutch their wine and all their brandy lose,
Disarmed of that from which their courage grows,

says Waller. Fielding, in "Tom Jones," speaks of "Dutch defence," in the sense of sham defence. "Dutch," or "Double Dutch," is often used as a synonym for gibberish, especially nowadays with reference to the prattle of young children. "Dutch feast" is a phrase now obsolete ; it was formerly applied to an entertainment where the host got drunk before his guests. "Dutch auctions" are well known.

In the "Daily Post" of April eleventh, 1724, there is a curious advertisement of such a sale, perhaps the first of the kind, though not under that name ; forty-four paintings, "of the best Italian and other masters," are announced "to be sold by auction, after a new method, that is, by lowering down from the price set, till the first bidder speaks to have it at the last mentioned price."

A writer in the "East Anglian" of 1869, in a list of sea words and phrases in use on the Suffolk coast, has the following : "There were the squires on the bench, but I took heart, and talked to 'em like a Dutch uncle." The use of this not very intelligible phrase is by no means confined to the Suffolk coast. The expression often heard, "Thank Heaven it is no worse," is sometimes called "Dutch consolation."

"Blue" is a favourite adjective in slang phrases. Schoolboys, in their own choice dialect, talk of "blue fear" and "blue funk." The indefinite period known as "once in a blue moon" is a favourite with Miss Braddon, if one may judge by her frequent use of the expression. The moon will doubtless not be blue until the Greek Calends, or, as they say in Ireland, till "Tib's Eve," whenever that may be.

Swift, in his "Polite Conversation," a wonderful series of dialogues, crammed with the colloquialisms current in the early part of the last century, uses the strange expression, "to blush like a blue dog," meaning, not to blush at all. More than a century earlier, in the "Apologie for the School of Abuse," published in 1579, Stephen Gosson speaks with similar meaning of blushing "like a blacke dogge." Both expressions appear to be equally meaningless.

To drink "till all is blue" is an old-established euphemism for getting very

drunk. Ford, in the "Lady's Trial" 1639, says: "We can drink till all look blue."

The antiquity of some of the common street sayings and phrases is surprising. The elegant retort, "you're another!" is a case in point. Readers of "Pickwick" will remember the famous quarrel between the friends. "Sir," said Mr. Tupman, "you're a fellow." "Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "you're another!" There is an amusing use of this expression in "Tom Jones." "You mistake me, friend," cries Partridge. "I did not mean to abuse the cloth; I only said your conclusion was a 'non sequitur.'" "You are another," cries the Serjeant, "an' you come to that. No more a 'sequitur' than yourself." But the saying is much older. In the earliest known regular English comedy, "Roister Doister," by Nicholas Udall, published about 1550, Ralph says: "If it were an other but thou, it were a knave;" to which his antagonist replies in latter-day phrase: "Ye are an other your selfe, sir." The common expression, "to know what's what," is also found in this early play.

When a tramp pursues his weary way along the dusty high-road, or a denizen of St. Giles's prowls about the streets, he would describe himself as "padding the hoof," but he would not know that he was using a phrase which, with slight alteration of the verb, dates from the time of Shakespeare. "Beat the hoof," is the older form; and, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," Falstaff says to his page, Robin: "Trudge, plod away o' the hoof; seek shelter, pack!" Most street expressions and popular cries are not so intelligible nor so long-lived as those mentioned. Many of them are simply idiotic, and, after a very short career of popular favour, give place to others equally senseless. About twenty-five or six years ago, the "gamins" made the echoes ring with cries of, "How's your poor feet?"—a query to which no reply was expected, but which was supposed to be a masterpiece of wit and repartee. Many other equally imbecile questions and exclamations have since been familiar to the ears of Londoners.

A common saying, implying loss of appetite or absence of the necessary food wherewith to satisfy it, is, "all holiday at Peckham." Goldsmith, in the early part of his London life, passed some miserable months as usher in a school at Peckham, and the memory of this doleful period was ever bitter to him. Years afterwards, a friend in conversation happened to speak

facetiously of it being "all holiday at Peckham," and was surprised to find that this innocent reference to a recognised proverbial phrase was regarded by Goldsmith as an unkind allusion to his past misery, and, therefore, a personal insult.

Sometimes the fun in these facetious phrases is of rather a ghastly nature, as witness the euphemisms for death by hanging: "To wear a horse's night-cap," that is, a halter; "to dance upon nothing," and "to die in one's shoes." This last was a common saying in the seventeenth century; it occurs in Sir Thomas Urquhart's translation of Rabelais.

The humour in many other cant phrases for death is somewhat grim:

Be kind to those dear little folks,
When our toes are turn'd up to the daisies!

pleads the mother to the wicked uncle in the Ingoldsby Legend of the "Babes in the Wood."

In the older writers, the heels take the place of the toes. Dekker, in his "Wonderful Yeaere," 1603, speaking of a person attacked by the plague, says that she "had like to have turned up her heeles upon it;" and four years earlier, in Nashe's "Lenten Stuffe," there is a description of a great sickness at Yarmouth, when, "in one yeaere, seven thousand and fifty people toppled up their heeles there."

To "hop the twig," to "peg out," to "lay down one's knife and fork," and the like, are more flippant than humorous. To "hand in one's checks" is one of the many phrases, of playing-card origin, imported from Western America. To go "off the hooks," is a modern synonym for dying; but Mr. Pepys uses it with the meaning of vexed or out of sorts. In his "Diary" of May the twenty-sixth, 1665, he says: "In the evening by water to the Duke of Albemarle, whom I found mightily off the hooks, that the ships are not gone out of the River; which vexed me to see."

This quotation, like others given above, shows that many of our present-day slang phrases are simply modifications, and sometimes revivals, of older expressions of respectable parentage.

The elder Disraeli says, truly enough, that the revival of old words is the purest source of neology; but it is a matter of regret that so many of the revivals should have gone to swell the impure, philologically speaking, tide of slang.

EARLY TRAVELS IN ENGLAND.

RUMMAGING through an old library the other day, I came across two small books, giving an account of two Frenchmen's travels in England in 1663. They were interesting to me, and so, perhaps, I can make an epitome interesting to the general reader.

Now 1663 is a very remote date to us merely in years, but it is much more distant if we think of the knowledge possessed by either country of the other. To be sure, Englishmen of the higher classes had acquired some considerable information about France and the Continent generally, for we were then as we are now, fighters and wanderers; and political events, as we know, had for many years caused great influx of Englishmen into France; but these were, as I have said, chiefly of the higher classes. To the bulk of the people France was absolutely unknown. But to Frenchmen generally, England was as far off as America. Hardly any one but the Ambassador and his suite had ever crossed the Channel, and not one, it may be safely said, had ever thought of learning the language and studying the country. It was not till some seventy years after that the French could learn anything of us from the pen of one of themselves, who had stopped long enough to learn the language and study the nation from all points of view. This honour was reserved for Voltaire, whose "Letters on the English" first saw the light in 1733.

The two travellers of whom I am about to treat were named Sorbière and Monconny; both were men of education, and the latter a man of position, who came for a short visit as guardian of the Duc de Chevreuse; both were intimately associated with the rising band of natural philosophers who were afterwards to be the founders of the Académie des Sciences, and of whom the names at least of Mersenne, Gassendi, Roberval, and Pascal, will be known to many readers. Naturally also they were well acquainted with those of the English philosophers who were to be the founders of the Royal Society: Digby, Moray, Lord Brouncker, and Oldenburg, who, during the rule of Cromwell, had spent their time in Paris. Best known however of all these was the famous Hobbes, two of whose works Sorbière had already translated into French.

From this short notice we may safely

conclude that these were just the sort of men who should travel and bring back to their own country a sober and correct account of a foreign land. And so they were, but all their admirable qualities were useless from their ignorance of our language. They made each a stay of a few weeks only, saw, to be sure, all there was to see, and reported faithfully. But that is not a knowledge of a country. Imagine one of us spending a few weeks at Paris without knowing a word of French. What can we say? The Rue de Rivoli is long and straight; the Boulevards are very thronged; the Arc de Triomphe is very big; the Madeleine is a beautiful church; the Pont Neuf is not nearly as long as any of the London bridges; coachmen go to the right instead of the left; and such small beer. Very well, our two travellers are very much of this kind; let us take them as we find them, and be thankful to have a commonplace account of London just after the Restoration, and before the Fire and the Plague.

To read Sorbière's dedication to the King is to throw ourselves into a totally different atmosphere from that of to-day. He thanks him for the gratification he received six months ago, but thinks it better, instead of returning and prostrating himself at the King's feet, to hasten to foreign countries to publish the fact. And perhaps this was not the worst way, for he has spread in England and Holland the report of the King's munificence.

Politicians have asked him to speak of the Royal application to affairs, of his penetration, and of his judgement. The valiant have been glad to have confirmed the reports of his courage; good Catholics, of his piety; the great, of the splendour of his Court; the people, of his goodness; and the fair sex, of his good looks. Considering that the King was only twenty-four, and had managed affairs for two years only, this may certainly be considered rather high-flown language. But to our travels.

It seems that, in 1663, the only communication between Calais and Dover was by a small decked boat which went to and fro, twice a week, at five shillings a head.

Monconny and the Duke left at two p.m. and arrived between eight and nine. Sorbière was not so fortunate. He had been introduced to an English lady for whom the Duke of York had sent a vessel, and who asked him to cross with her. The passage took twelve hours, and he was sick

all the time—a very unfortunate though very usual occurrence.

He would naturally, therefore, be in no very philosophic frame of mind when he landed, and he was very much disgusted at his reception on English ground, for the children followed him, crying out: "A mounseer;" and when he showed a wish to get rid of them, they further proceeded to shout out: "French dog."

He makes the remark that, at Calais, new-comers are welcomed heartily, and the inhabitants show their good-nature by many officious acts. Here, however, nobody offered to do anything for him, but he was allowed to go his own way as best he chose.

The contrast is certainly great, but he very sensibly observes that perhaps his countrymen have themselves to blame in a great measure, as their fussy, excitable ways are so different from the serious and cold habits of the English, and the way they have of looking after themselves.

Monconnys and the Duke posted to Gravesend, and thence got into a boat which had been waiting for them, and were quickly rowed up to London.

Sorbière was compelled to go by the stage waggon, which, drawn by six horses one in front of the other, and the driver walking alongside, seemed to him a wonderful sight.

The judicious reader will here, no doubt, reflect on his luck in being born in this century. Fancy going from Dover to Gravesend in a waggon—fifty-one mortal miles—at the rate of, I suppose, two miles an hour at most!

There is, however, one feature which is undeniable; you have plenty of opportunity of seeing the country. Sorbière is enthusiastic in praise of the scenery, the eternal verdure, the striking beauty of the apple and cherry orchards; nowhere is the grass so green, or the turf so smooth, and the trees are so plentiful as to give the district the appearance of a forest.

This would appear all the more beautiful by contrast with the route he had just followed in his own country. Everybody who has been to Paris by the regular way must have been struck by the dreariness of the journey from Calais inland. It is most unfortunate for the reputation of "La belle France," that the most travelled route should be so detestable. But the fact is, that not one in a hundred sees the best parts of France. The proper way is to go up the Seine to Paris, and then spend some time in Touraine and along the Loire.

But everything comes to an end, even a waggon journey. Gravesend was reached at last, where a boat was taken to London. This had been for ages, and was for a century afterwards, the regular route to the city, being cheaper and safer than the journey by land, which led over Blackheath, where, as likely as not, a highwayman might be met with, and this contingency was avoided by going up the crowded river.

Both our travellers are amazed at the size of the river, the enormous traffic, the forest of masts everywhere visible, especially just below London Bridge (then the only one), and above all at the naval workshops, crowded with vessels of all sizes and all states of completion. Monconnys was especially struck with the number of little vessels above the bridge, about three hundred he was told, called Botz if they have two men, Scollars if only one. The fare in the former was sixpence from the bridge to Westminster, or any part of the distance, however small; sculls were half the price. Everybody used them, and the traffic was enormous; it was so much more convenient than through the streets, for these were narrow and the pavement bad.

We must not forget that in those days the City and Westminster were far apart. You left the former by Temple Bar, and to Westminster was as far as from the Pont Neuf to Chaillot. The extent of the city was surprising; it was much larger and had more houses than Paris, but not as many people. This is not surprising when we recollect that then, as now, the rule with us is one house one family, whereas in Paris, one house contained an indefinite number. It took two hours to walk from one end to the other, and three-quarters to walk across. Sorbière put up at first in Common (Covent) Garden, which is the best situation for Frenchmen, who have more to do with the Court than with the Exchange; but he appears to have soon got into apartments, very good rooms on the first floor near Salisbury House, where Hobbes was then living with his patron, the Earl of Devonshire; for these he paid a crown a week.

The best view of the city was to be got from the river; the houses were numberless, but without architecture; plenty of gardens, the sole ornamentation of which consisted of grass plots, wonderfully green and smooth beyond description. This latter was the effect of rolling by means of stone cylinders

dragged by one or two men, which must have been a new experience to both our travellers, as they mention them more than once. It is certainly interesting to notice the effect produced by our commonplace garden-roller.

We get a long description of Westminster Abbey, which we need not repeat. St. Paul's would be magnificent, if it were not half in ruins, having served as stables and magazines for Cromwell's cavalry. All about it was the booksellers' quarter, but they were by no means confined to this part, as the trade was spread all over the city.

A few days after their arrival, Monconny and the Duke went to High Park, a mile out of the city, to see the King reviewing some of his cavalry, after which they adjourned to Whitehall to salute His Majesty. The Queen was not pretty, but looked pleasant and good-tempered. The Duchess of York was ugly, and had a very large mouth and red eyes, but was very good-natured and spoke French well. Her mother was there, standing like everybody else. Thence to St. James's Park, where was a collection of beasts and birds. The latest arrival was an Indian bird called a "quessa ouarro," the size and shape of an ostrich. For the benefit of the unlearned in French, it may perhaps be well to say that this peculiar spelling represents our cassowary.

The King, as is well known, took much interest in natural history, and in experiments of all kinds. This is confirmed by our travellers, who tell us of His Majesty going twice to see a man and a woman dissected. It was through this taste that the Royal Society had the King's favours bestowed on it, and received its charter, at the first reading of which Sorbière assisted, and gives an account of the proceedings, and a description of the document. He had also the honour of being admitted a Fellow, and his name is accordingly found in the list of members till his death in 1670. Sir Robert Moray presented him to the King, who took him to a meeting of the Society, placed him next to himself, and explained the proceedings as they went on. The meetings were then held in Gresham College every Wednesday. It is curious to read the sort of thing that was regularly brought before that learned body. It is enough to make one burst out laughing; but then comes the reflection that natural science was then in its infancy, and its votaries were groping

in the dark, honestly and patiently attempting in any and every way to get to light. From this point of view nothing can be more interesting than the early proceedings of the Royal Society. At one of the meetings it was reported that there is a lake in Ireland into which if a long stick is inserted, and left there a year or so, the part which penetrates the bottom becomes metallic, that in the water becomes petrified, and that in the air undergoes no change. Monconny received confirmation from a compatriot of his own who had seen one of these wonderful sticks, and told him in addition that the lake was Lough Erne, and that when in a boat you could see down below the towers and steeples of a submerged town.

It was further reported that toads, vipers, and other venomous creatures could not live in Ireland, and an experiment had been made by bringing them from England on their native earth, on attempting to leave which and crawl on Irish ground, they turned back, and after doing so several times, finally died. The great hall of Whitehall had all its carpentry of Irish wood, consequently not a spider in it; and they say if one touches the wood it immediately drops dead. Visiting the same building again, Monconny looked out carefully for spiders, and he certainly did see some, but they were not on the wood.

The King had recently put up a mast in St. James's Park for a telescope, through which Sir Robert Moray showed his friends Saturn and the satellites of Jupiter. We must here remember that these early telescopes were of very great length, and to suspend them from a tall mast was a very natural proceeding. It is worthy of remark that the best opticians were English, and that Bailey in St. Paul's Churchyard had the greatest reputation. Telescopes for ordinary purposes were six pounds each, and a pair of spectacles four shillings.

One day was partly taken up by seeing the King touch for the evil. Each patient was given a gold piece, which he was obliged to keep, or his complaint returned. Monconny was told that one sufferer who had been cured, and afterwards lost his piece, had a renewal of the disorder. They gave him many instances of the cure, because, as he naïvely says, he doubted much. A gentleman and a lady assured him that when the late King was in custody, a man asked to be touched. The

soldiers refusing, the King called out that he prayed he might enjoy the virtue of his power as much as if he had been touched; which so happened, and the man was cured.

Another day was given to sport. One of the Jermyns, a nephew of Lord St. Albans, had made a bet that he would ride on one horse eighteen miles in an hour, and he did it in fifty-five minutes. Another did twenty miles in the same time, and wanted to bet he would do it again right off on the same horse; but nobody appears to have taken him. Then they went to see a bout at cudgel-playing, which was a novel sight, and not unpleasing; but the impression it left was that the whole affair was arranged by the combatants beforehand—a pretty good proof that “plants” and “crosses” can lay claim to a respectable antiquity. Then followed an amusement of which we have all heard a good deal, but of which nobody has any very detailed notion. This was a bear-baiting. Bruin, it seems, was securely fastened by the nose, and, when the dogs got fast hold of him they were got off by sticking thick cudgels in their mouths and pulling hard at their tails.

This sorry diversion—as Monconnys calls it—was soon at an end, and, in place of the bear, appeared a bull, who was fastened by a strong rope round the neck to a stout post and had his horns covered. But, for all that, he tossed all the dogs who got near enough, and made them throw five or six summersaults, after which they fell on the ground or amongst the spectators. They would not, however, be beaten for all that, and never failed to rush at the bull again, and sometimes managed to get hold of an ear. This was a much more agreeable diversion than the first, but was itself infinitely surpassed by a monkey on a pony, which, when chivied by the dogs, ran about and sometimes tumbled, without the monkey ever letting go, and not seldom the pony rushed amongst the spectators and upset them and itself as well.

Another day they went to see the King and Queen at dinner, which was served under an embroidered dais in a great hall, into which anybody could enter and see what was going on, for the doors were always open, and people of whatever rank had nothing to do but walk into the audience chamber. Even when the King was hunting the peasants got on their horses and hunted with him.

It is pretty generally known that our forefathers began hunting earlier and kept it up later than we do now; but it is rather astonishing to find that the Royal pack met at four o'clock in the morning.

In the evening the strangers went to a small ball given by the Queen at Whitehall. It lasted till midnight—a Cinderella evidently. In the middle the King arrived and took the Queen as partner, who next took the Duc de Chevreuse, the King then leading out Lady Castlemaine. The ball began with a branle, as in France, and then followed courantes and other dances. When the King or Queen danced, all the ladies stood up; and, when the Duke of York danced, the ladies rose when he began and then sat down again. The hall was lighted by a great number of lights in silver candlesticks, placed on the mantelpiece, and by eight or ten beefeaters, who stood against the walls and held up large white candles.

Our travellers naturally paid a visit to the theatre. We are not told which of the two or three then open, or what was the play; but it is gratifying to find Monconnys saying that it was the cleanest and most beautiful he had ever seen, hung all round with green baize, and the boxes lined with gilt leather. All the benches in the pit—where the people of condition sit—were ranged in an amphitheatre, each higher than the one in front. The change of scene and the machinery were most ingeniously invented and carried out. It is interesting to compare what Pepys says in his *Diary* under date of February the first, 1661:

“Thence to the theatre, and there sat in the pitt among the company of fine ladys,” etc.; and on May the ninth, 1663: “We home by water, having been a little shamed that my wife and woman were in such a pickle, all the ladies being finer and better dressed in the pitt than they used, I think.”

Three of our travellers went to Oxford in a carriage at ten shillings a head. They slept at Wykeham, twenty-seven miles from London, where they noticed that though only a village, there were elaborately ornamented sign-boards, which projected into the middle of the street, so as to prevent carriages passing except at the sides. They were told this was the custom all through the country, as they might judge for themselves in London, where the well-known sign of the Moon cost one hundred and twenty pounds, and that of the Crescent, one

hundred pounds. The journey took them from eleven to half-past eight. They did the other twenty miles next day. They had introductions to Wallis, the celebrated professor of mathematics, under whose guidance they saw everybody and everything of note in the University, of which they gave a long and accurate description. On one of the days, which must have been a Sunday, they went to Christ Church to hear a sermon, then to dinner with Wallis, thence to St. Mary's for another sermon, and then later on to Christ Church, to hear vespers, of all which they did not understand one word.

They did not fail to notice the big brazen nose at the door of one of the Colleges, and were told that Duns Scotus taught there, and so they put his nose up as a remembrance. They saw a pen and ink portrait of the late King, which was very rarely shown, every line in which was made up of the Psalms in Latin, in the minutest writing possible. This is of course that mentioned by Addison, in the 58th "Spectator":

"When I was last at Oxford, I perused one of the whiskers and was reading the other, but could not go so far in it as I would have done, by reason of the impatience of my friends and fellow travellers, who all of them pressed to see such a piece of curiosity. I have since heard that there is now an eminent writing master in town who has transcribed all the Old Testament in a full-bottomed periwig; and if the fashion should introduce the thick kind of wigs which were in vogue some few years ago, he promises to add two or three supernumerary locks that shall contain all the Apocrypha. He designed this wig originally for King William, having disposed of the two Books of Kings in the two forks of the foretop; but that glorious monarch dying before the wig was finished, there is a space left in it for the face of any one that has a mind to purchase it."

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART II.

CHAPTER VI. "JOUR DE FÊTE."

SUNDAY morning was quite still, and intensely hot, even between nine and ten o'clock, when château and village were preparing to go to mass. The sky was

deep blue; only on the horizon lay a great rampart of white cloud, threatening storm; but nobody thought of that. Colour, light, shadow, were all vivid in a most transparent air; the scent of white acacia flowers hovered about the old buildings.

When Captain Percival came out of the house, strolling up and down the terrace, and looking about him, the dogs that were lying in the sun got up slowly and crept away towards the yard. In the house there was a noise of shutters and bars; but since old Pierre brought him his coffee, Vincent had not seen a human being about the place. Now, however, in the sunny distance, from the shade of the great chestnuts behind the left-hand wall to the deeper shade of the avenue, a string of people began slowly passing; women in black dresses, men in clean blue blouses and shiny caps. Their laughing chatter reached the Englishman's ears as he stood on the terrace, till it was lost in the not unmusical jangle of the church bells, suddenly beginning again. Then a young, sweet voice cried out:

"Suzanne, Suzanne! Make haste! I want you to come with me;" and Antoinette stepped out into the sunshine.

Then her dark eyes fell rather gravely on Vincent, and she made him a little bow.

"Good-morning, monsieur," she said.

"Good-morning, mademoiselle," said Vincent, lifting his hat as he came forward. "What a jolly day! Where's Celia? Do you know?"

"She has not come down yet. She will be here directly."

"I was just thinking how tremendously lonely this place was," said Vincent, by way of making himself agreeable, "when I saw a whole string of people crossing your avenue down there. There they go—more of them. Is there a right of way? That must be rather a bore, I should think."

"I don't know," said Antoinette. "Some of them come from the farm, and some more from farms and cottages away in the little lanes, among the woods and heaths up there. It is their shortest way to church, you see. If they did not cross our avenue, they would have to go a long way round by the high road."

"And your father can't stop them?"

"Mais si!" said Antoinette, opening her eyes. "He could stop them, no doubt, if he chose. But why should he? That would not be right, to give the poor people so much extra fatigue."

"Right! well, that depends on the point of view," said Vincent, with a slight grin. "It would be right to himself, and to his family, and his successors, to put a stop to a nuisance like that without further fuss. A path made by the peasants within a couple of hundred yards of one's front door! If the place belonged to me I should object to it strongly. Why, let them go round by the high road. What is the high road for, except to take people from place to place? But perhaps your father goes in for being popular with the peasants?"

"Of course, he likes them to like him," said Antoinette, after listening with some surprise. "But that is not the reason——"

"Ah, of course, there comes in the weak point. That is how you French people lost everything before; and you will lose it again, not knowing how to stand up for your own rights."

Vincent spoke almost angrily. Mademoiselle de Montmirail looked at him, then looked at the distant passing figures, and laughed.

"That is your opinion?" she said.

Suzanne did not come, and there were no signs of Celia. Antoinette looked up at the house a little impatiently, as the bells went on ringing. She could not start off to church by herself, and therefore, at this moment, escape from the Englishman seemed impossible.

"Are you in a hurry?" he said. "You won't have anybody at church with that fair going on."

"Pardon! It does not begin till mass is over. Everybody goes to church in the morning."

"You don't say so! What very good people! Or are they afraid of the Curé? Does he send them all to perdition in his sermons?"

"The people are not better than in other places, but they know it is their duty to go to church," said Antoinette. "No, I don't think the Curé frightens them. He is very good; they like him. Of course he detests the fête, because it disturbs everything, and makes it much harder for them. The people who come with the shows and lotteries are often 'méchants.' But it must be—and, after all, it is a very pretty sight, especially in the evening."

"A village fair is not often a pretty sight in the evening," said Vincent.

"My father says they manage these things differently in England."

"I suppose we do. Perhaps there is more human nature in English people. But really you are not going to persuade me that Anjou and Arcadia are the same thing."

"I don't know," she said, smiling. "But we shall go down to the village to-night, after it is dark—if my father comes home in time to take us—and then you will see how nice the people are."

Vincent looked at her curiously. He did not admire the girl; she was far too noble a type for him; and yet he rather wished to make friends with her. He saw that La Tour Blanche might often be a pleasant change from England and Woolsborough; and he thought he might as well be welcome to its inhabitants. Of the constant friendship of its mistress he felt tolerably sure, though hardly knowing why. It seemed to him that in spite of herself, in spite of fate, in spite of circumstances, she must be nearer to him than to these French people, though she had chosen to pass her life with them. One thing, at any rate, was clear; life away from Celia was a dull, uninteresting concern. Though last night he had parted with her half in anger, this morning he had got up with the one idea of seeing her again. Foolish and wrong, yes; but in Vincent's way of arguing, he had a full right to burn his own fingers if he chose; and so, as Antoinette de Montmirail was so nearly connected with Celia, he was beginning to think it better that she should not dislike him.

"Mon Dieu, we shall be late," exclaimed the girl, with an impatient shrug, as the bells, which had stopped for a few minutes, began a different chime. "Ah, there you are, Suzanne! Come, come, I am not going to wait for maman. Let us go on."

Suzanne stumped serenely across the terrace. She looked handsome and agreeable, dressed in black, her broad face surmounted by a gorgeous bonnet covered with flowers. It was now several years since Suzanne had ceased to wear her white frilled cap on Sundays.

"Plenty of time, mademoiselle," she said.

"Madame la Marquise is coming directly."

"Never mind; I am going with you," said Antoinette; and they walked quickly away together.

Suzanne looked back once or twice—to see if madame was coming—she explained to Antoinette.

"Don't disturb yourself; of course she will come," said the girl, a little proudly.

"And the English gentleman too?"

"I should think not. He seems to have no religion. I suppose it won't do to say I hope not," said Antoinette, laughing a little. "Because it might do him good. But it would distract me very much to see him in church."

"And me too!" exclaimed the old nurse. "It is a pity, is it not, mademoiselle, that such a gentleman should have come to the chateau while M. le Marquis was away? He is not a very good companion for madame and mademoiselle. M. le Marquis likes the English, I know; but this must be one of a bad sort. Pierre says so, and Pierre is sharp enough, considering his age."

Suzanne glanced aside at her young mistress, and pinched her mouth up wisely. She was not going to give her more than the faintest hint of Pierre's opinion. Pierre had in fact spoken plainly to his wife the night before. He was a man of the world, and Captain Percival had not been in the house half an hour, before the old servant's suspicions had gathered like a cloud round his head.

"My father is coming back to-night, you know," said Antoinette.

"C'est bien!" said Suzanne heartily. Then she listened with an indulgent smile as the girl went on.

"Yes, he is certainly disagreeable, but he must be nicer than he seems, because he is maman's cousin, you know, and such an old friend of hers. It is so difficult to understand foreigners. Don't you see, Suzanne, I suppose that what we think rude and nasty, they think polite and nice. Our customs are very often quite contrary; just as my father says, that in England you keep on the left side of the road when you are driving."

"Is it possible, mademoiselle! But how awkward, how puzzling for the horses!"

Antoinette laughed. "I suppose they don't find it so," she said.

"What mademoiselle says is all very well," said Suzanne, nodding her head violently a great many times. "But she will not persuade me that this gentleman is like the English cousins of Monsieur le Marquis, for instance—or that monsieur would be so fond of the English, if they were all like this."

"Perhaps not," said Antoinette. "But now let us say no more, my dear Suzanne; because you see he is connected with us; and, after all, disagreeable people are not always bad."

Suzanne shrugged her shoulders.

"Mademoiselle," she said, "I have with my own ears heard madame your grandmother say, that a good heart and good manners were the same thing. How often have I told that, as a warning, to my poor old Pierre, when his temper was not quite as it should be!"

"I don't think grandmamma was the first person to say that," said Antoinette.

"Anyhow, it was Madame la Vicomtesse who said it in my hearing, and I have never forgotten it," persisted Suzanne. "And another thing I am sure of, that this English Captain would not have pleased Madame la Vicomtesse. He is not the sort of person she would have liked to see in company with mademoiselle."

"Well," said Antoinette, with an impatient little sigh, "I said we would talk no more about him. Tell me about the fête. Is it going to be a good one, do you know? Shall I turn the wheels for you, and win a few cups and saucers?"

They had by this time reached the lower end of the avenue, where it opened on a road edged with poplars, leading along by the river-side. Under the trees the brown earth was covered with what looked like a soft shower of snow-flakes: the downy blossoms of the trees, which came floating down almost without a breath of wind to move them. Antoinette stooped to pick up one or two of the light white feathers, and she and Suzanne both turned at the same moment and looked back up the avenue. The marquise and her English cousin were walking slowly down through the shadows and the trembling, varied sunbeams.

"Coming, after all!" muttered Suzanne; but Antoinette did not speak; she only walked on a little faster, and presently seemed to forget these things in delighted amusement at the gay booths with which the village street was lined from end to end.

"You and I will come down this afternoon," she said; "that is the best time for buying. And then, after dinner, papa will be here, and we can all come down together."

They walked on towards the church steps, where the villagers were standing about in groups, talking, while a few were slowly going into church. From inside the doors came a sound of singing of litanies; it was hardly time yet for the mass to begin. All the village faces in the sunshine looked smiling and pleasant; the

men's blouses looked stiff and new, the women's caps even whiter than usual, in honour of the fête. Last year it had rained; this year their village was highly favoured.

Antoinette spoke to a few of her special friends, and smiled and nodded to others. Her young, bright face was full of sweetness, especially for the quaint little children who crowded round. Though so unlike her father in appearance, she had all the simple charm of manner which made him so popular among the peasants.

"Monsieur le Capitaine has turned back; there is madame coming alone," Suzanne said to her as she was going on up the steps to the church door.

"Ah, we will go back," the girl said quickly; and she set off walking so fast that Suzanne, who was fat, could hardly keep up with her. Presently she turned back, feeling herself no longer necessary, as mademoiselle had joined her step-mother. The excellent Suzanne looked annoyed, and went into church muttering, with a cloud on her charming face.

"You were in a great hurry, petite," said Celia, who was looking as fair and serene as usual. "Why didn't you wait for me?"

"I thought the bells had changed," said Antoinette, a little disturbed. "And then, when I first called Suzanne, I thought monsieur your cousin was coming too; and when she came I thought I had better go with her."

"Well, it doesn't matter," said Celia lazily. "Monsieur my cousin does not care for our services, you see."

"He is, perhaps, not exactly a Christian," said Antoinette after a little pause, with a sort of awe in her voice.

Celia laughed.

"My dear child, what extraordinary things you say! He would be amused. His father is next door to a Bishop in the English Church, and you accuse him of not being a Christian. You must remember that very few men are as good as your father, Netta."

"Ah, indeed, no!" cried the girl triumphantly. "What happiness that he is coming home to-night!" she said, looking brightly into Celia's face.

"Yes; it seems a long time since he went away," answered Celia.

She was never ecstatic. Sometimes Antoinette could admire her quietness, the steady and comfortable way in which she took most things that happened. Once or

twice the girl had even distrusted her own eager feelings; they seemed shallow and worthless beside that calm smile of Celia's, which suggested depths it seemed to hide, and put all hopes, and longings, and regrets, on their own proper level. Yet, somehow, Celia's words that morning fell a little coldly on Antoinette's heart; and she could not quite reprove and comfort herself in the old way, with the old fiction: "But she is his wife; of course she must love him even better than I do."

The slight impression soon wore off, however, and after the service, Antoinette felt happy enough, though Captain Percival was loitering in the avenue, waiting for them.

He and Celia had plenty to say to each other, and Antoinette disliked his presence a little less when she was not obliged to talk to him. After breakfast they all went out again in the glorious sunshine, with the dogs, and wandered round the still half-ruinous precincts of the old place. Vincent had a way of openly contrasting everything he saw with the English fashion of farming, gardening, wood-craft, building, and so on, very much to the disadvantage of France. Antoinette thought all this anything but polite or amiable, and devoted herself to the dogs, while Celia argued with her cousin in a peaceful, lazy way. Perhaps half his remarks were made for the pleasure of being contradicted, and of indulging the peculiar kind of impertinence which was almost his native air.

Antoinette had not been brought up in a way to make her understand this; and in her simple heart she believed that he meant earnestly all he said. Her father's frank straightforwardness had not trained her to understand the talk of the Vincent Percival kind of man. She was glad enough to leave him to Celia, while she made excursions with the dogs wherever their fancy led them, round the bright vineyards, through the young chestnut woods, along by the wild straggling hedges with their golden broom and wild roses. The others did not trouble themselves about her, any more than if she had been a child or a dog. Vincent was looking at Celia, when he was not finding fault with the things she showed him. Celia seemed a little more lively and active than was usual with her now; she laughed; her answers to his cool remarks had something of the life and spirit of five years ago; her cheeks had a touch of lovely pink, and her eyes were as blue as the sky. She and

her companion walked on rather quickly at last, and were standing on the terrace when Antoinette came up to them with a cluster of yellow roses in her hand.

"These are for you," she said to Celia. "The tree in my garden is covered with them."

"Thanks, dear child," said Celia graciously.

"Have you a garden of your own, made-moiselle? How charming!" said Vincent, and he stretched out his hand for a rose, which Celia gave him. "You ought to grow these roses for yourself, though, not for Madame de Montmirail. They suit your complexion and not hers."

"I don't grow them for anybody—but she likes them," Antoinette answered rather stiffly; and then Celia interposed.

"Have you enjoyed your walk, Antoinette? Are you tired? You have been running about with the dogs everywhere."

"Yes, maman, I have enjoyed it very much; the day is perfect. And you?"

"If looks tell the truth——" began Vincent.

Antoinette did not quite see why he should answer for Celia; but it was necessary to listen to him, and Celia glanced up and laughed.

"Looks? What do you mean?" she said to Vincent.

"Ah, maman, he means that you are looking even more beautiful than usual," murmured Antoinette. "Papa would say so if he were here."

"Don't flatter me," said Celia. "Come, you are both talking nonsense. I am tired. I shall go in."

"I have seen you look like this before," said Vincent deliberately, staring at her. "Once in a garden, by a river, when you chose to go in for being a witch. You looked as you do now, and awfully happy, which you were, too, though there was a poor devil at the other end——"

As he spoke, Celia turned pale to the lips, though she looked at him steadily.

"Yes, the dear old garden at River Gate," she said, "how pretty it used to be in the evening. My memory is not so good as yours, though, and I think I was always awfully happy; and there were plenty of other children, besides me, who used to like playing at witches. Now I am going in; and I advise you to smoke, and meditate a little. Come, Antoinette."

Captain Percival found himself left alone

upon the terrace, where there was now a little shade. He sat down on a bench, but he did not smoke, and his meditations were not particularly sweet. He was inclined to call himself a fool; had he been short-sighted enough to make Celia angry? There was a kind of enjoyment in it, too, for a nature like his; quarrelling with her might be better than a cold, painful pretence of being "the worldly friends of every day." He told himself, truly, that he could not manage to be a humbug, an actor, like Celia herself. And yet, by thus making her angry, he felt that he risked losing even the friendship which she seemed willing to let him keep. As he sat there on the terrace, listening to a distant sound of gay dance music in the village, he half expected Celia to come out of the house again, having disposed of her young step-daughter, with the intention of telling him that he had better go away the next morning. He must agree with her; it would be much better; but he would at any rate, indulge himself by telling her a few truths before he went. A fine scene, indeed, was prepared for Celia in the thoughts of this troublesome old lover of hers; and when, after some minutes, he heard the house-door open, he got up and turned that way with a slight feeling of triumph.

But it was not Celia, after all; only the child Antoinette, with her old Suzanne in attendance.

"Are you off for another walk?" he said, speaking quite gently in his disappointment.

"We are going to vespers," said Antoinette; "and after that to see the fête."

As she spoke, the church bells began to chime.

"May I go with you?" said Vincent, he did not know why.

"No," said Antoinette, shaking her head with a slightly puzzled smile. "Maman says you will admire it more in the evening."

"And maman is always right?"

"But always!" Antoinette answered gravely; and then she and the old nurse went on her way, and Vincent returned to his bench.

"Always right—never in the wrong—trust you for that, Madame la Marquise!" he muttered to himself, as he sat waiting for Celia.

But Celia did not come.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

AT THE MOMENT OF VICTORY.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," etc.

PROLOGUE.

THE hush of twilight was falling upon the rugged mountains and deep ravines of Santa Maura, a lonely hamlet on the Corsican coast; bird-notes were dying under it; the whirr and stir of summer insect life were growing faint; even the wash and swirl of the Mediterranean sounded dreamy and far away under the spell of the "silent-footed angel-herald of the night." He beckoned to the great, gloomy forests of pine and cork, and they sent forth their shadows in troops and squadrons; laid his soft, dull hand on the heavy odours of magnolia and myrtle; he drew his veil of mist from east to west across the stormily-purple sky, and the smirch of tawny orange, which marked where a great, golden sun had blazed itself out, was seen no more; touched with his finger of mystery the figure of a woman descending a mountain path straight into the heart of a ravine, and lo! she stood transfigured into the likeness of a ghostly visitant from the kingdom of Hades.

That woman might have been Astarte herself for the silent grace of her movements and the dead whiteness of her face, which showed as if moon-washed from out the surrounding dimness.

In the ravine into which she was descending, Night was following hard and fast on the "angel-herald's" steps to claim his own. The mountains rose more gaunt, more drear, more black with every downward step the woman took, until, at length,

they seemed literally to pierce the vaporous grey sky with their peaks and turrets.

High over one of the highest of these peaks there shone out through the vapour one star of intense brightness; at the immediate base of this rock, bowered amid olives and vines, stood a small, country house, a stone-built chalet, surrounded by a narrow strip of garden.

The woman was making her way straight to this chalet. At its garden-gate she paused for a moment, looking right and left and in all directions, as if to make sure that her movements were unseen. Unheard they must have been; not ghostly fingers themselves could have unlatched that gate more noiselessly, nor ghostly feet have trodden with a lighter footfall that garden path, which, winding in and out among arbutus-trees and myrtles, led to the creeper-covered porch of the house. Under this porch had been placed a small table and a rustic reclining seat. On this seat lay a man, locked in heavy slumber.

He was about thirty years of age, and of remarkably handsome appearance, swarthy, mustachioed, and with waves of black, curly hair sweeping across his forehead. His arm pillowed his head. On the ground at his feet, as if carelessly tossed on one side, lay a broad-brimmed hat. On the small table beside him stood a glass about three-parts filled with wine.

This way, that way, all ways the woman looked hurriedly, furtively, with every step she took. Not a sound broke the stillness; not a leaf rustled, nor belated insect flitted. She stood within a hand's breadth of the man now; she held in her breath; then, slowly, cautiously drawing from beneath her cloak a small phial, she poured its contents noiselessly into the glass of wine.

As she drained the last drop into the glass she chanced to lift her eyes to the door of the house. It stood wide open, disclosing a stove-place filled with flowering plants, over which, against the wall, hung a large, square mirror.

In that mirror, as the woman lifted her eyes, she could see darkly reflected the whole shadowy garden-picture. She could see, also, her own white face, and white hand which held the small phial.

CHAPTER I.

"WHEN I marry again," said young Mrs. Cohen, with cheeks something the colour of field poppies, and eyes that flashed like diamonds under the lamplight, "I shall marry a boy—years younger than I!"

"Quite so," assented her companion, a young man who leaned over the piano at which she was seated; "it is absurd for women to marry men older than themselves!"

"And it is very ridiculous of you," continued the lady, "to imagine because I like to—to——"

"Squabble?" suggested the gentleman.

"Have a little fun with you now and then, that, therefore, I am willing to marry you."

"My dear Madge, I never for a moment imagined anything of the sort. I took your last 'No' as final six months ago."

"Every one knows that you are years too old for me."

"Oh yes, years too old. I am the whole of three years and three quarters older than you are."

"Every one knows that we haven't the faintest liking for each other."

"Exactly. Every one knows," mimicked the young man, "that we can't be ten minutes in the same room without quarrelling."

"In fact," continued the lady with heightening voice as well as colour, "we are getting positively to detest each other."

"The wonder is that we are ever to be found in each other's company."

"I am positive," cried Mrs. Cohen, jumping up from her music-stool, "that it was you who said that 'the library was getting confoundedly hot'; yes, those were your very words, and you must 'get out of it.'"

"I am confident it was you who looked over your shoulder—at me—and said, 'I

am going into the music-room to practise, and——'"

"Yes," interrupted the lady, "that was because I saw Sir Peter looking at me, and I knew how delighted he would be if we crept out of the room together for all the world as if we——"

"Were bent on spooning?"

"And it's of no use your standing there agreeing with me as if I didn't know what I was talking about, or didn't mean what I said. I repeat, when I marry again, I will marry a boy if I like."

"Why not? How would you like a nice little middy, about fourteen?"

"He shan't be a day over twenty at any rate, and he shall be obedient, and tractable, and I shall call him 'my child.'"

"Ah, he'll like that!"

"And I'll tell him where to get his clothes and what cigars to buy!"

"He'll be sure to buy them, won't he? Look here, Madge, let's give over squabbling, and strike a bargain. I'll engage to look out for this amiable young gentleman, who'll buy his clothes and cigars where his wife tells him, if you will undertake to marry him so soon as he's found. I can't say more, can I?"

Madge made no reply. She seated herself at the piano once more, struck a chord, ran off a little prelude, and then commenced singing her scales at a very high pitch.

Her voice was a mezzo-soprano, and her high A was a very high A indeed.

Here is the portrait of Mrs. Cohen as she sits at her piano.

Age twenty-four years; figure small and slight. Eyes, hazel-green and deep-seated. Eye-brows, dark and arched—the best feature in her face. Nose, inclined to the classic, but nothing remarkable. Mouth small and sensitive. Complexion decidedly sallow, but flushing readily under excitement. Hair, dark brown, cut short, thick and curly.

"Young Mrs. Cohen would be nothing without her curls," once Madge had heard a dowager say as she left a ball-room. Since then she had diligently cultivated her curls as her one strong weapon in her armoury of charms—an armoury, by the way, of which she had not a very exalted opinion.

"I think you are a remarkably plain young woman. It is a positive trial to be confronted with you so many times a day," she was in the habit of saying when she looked at herself in her mirror.

And here is the portrait of Lancelot

Clive, the young man who stood for a moment listening to the scales and then walked away, saying to himself: "Not 'soft, gentle, and low,' to-day at any rate!"

Age, close upon eight-and-twenty. Good height, well-developed chest. Eyes, bright blue, sparkling and fun-loving. Hair, golden brown, irrepressibly curly, no matter how short it might be cropped, and a complexion bronzed by constant outdoor exercise.

Madge half-turned her head as her companion left the room, but she in no wise lowered the pitch of her A. Madge's vocal scales were a wonderful outlet for her superfluous energy. She had recommenced taking singing lessons within a week of her marriage with old David Cohen, the retired diamond merchant; had dropped them in the early days of her widowhood, but had resumed them with surprising vigour during the present year, when she had once more taken up her abode in the home of her girlhood.

"Selling herself for a diamond necklace," had been Lance's summing up of the marriage, to which he had received a hasty summons, while pursuing his studies at Oxford. A summons, by the way, to which he did not see fit to respond.

"Doing what is expected of me as Sir Peter's protégée — keeping Lance from making himself ridiculous and blighting his prospects in life," had been Madge's version of the case to her own heart, as she stood before the altar vowing to "love, honour, and obey" a man old enough to be her grandfather, and whose highest conception of happiness was an interval of freedom from gout, which enabled him to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the money article in the daily paper.

Madge was in the very middle of a voluminous shake on her high A when the door behind her opened, and admitted a small, plump old gentleman, who looked as if he were in a very great hurry indeed.

There was something in the mere turn of the handle which made Madge say to herself: "It's Sir Peter," and stop her singing at once.

"Madge," said the old gentleman, "where is Lady Judith?" But he did not wait for an answer. He had crossed the room and had gone out by another door before Madge could open her lips.

She did not, however, recommence her singing; she knew by experience that he would soon come back again with possibly another question.

He did so come back; this time entering by one of the long French windows of the room, and his question now was:

"Where is Lance—can't find anybody this morning, and I've so many things to get through, I don't know which way to turn?" and then he disappeared again.

This small plump old gentleman was Sir Peter Critchett, sixth Baronet of that name, of Upton Castle, in the County of Cumberland. His plumpness was a remarkable fact if the extraordinary activity of his habits were taken into account. Except at meal-times, he was never still.

"He's a fortune to me in boots," Sir Peter's London bootmaker was wont to affirm, as he packed up the last of the twenty-five pairs he was in the habit of sending yearly to Upton Castle.

And "He pays the salary of my head man in the carpets he wears out," said the upholsterer, recollecting the number of times that he had been called upon to renew the library carpet in Sir Peter's town and country houses.

Cruikshank would have delighted in sketching Sir Peter's plump, placid face, separated from his bald head by a ridge of stiff, greyish hair, which radiated in hard lines backward from his temples.

Lance had often tried to rival Cruikshank on the backs of old envelopes and magazine covers. Once, in the very middle of dressing for dinner, he had snatched up his hair-brush, and with pen and ink had sketched two very round eyes overarched by two very astonished-looking eyebrows, a short nose—a mark of exclamation expressed it exactly—an innocent-looking little mouth, and no chin to speak of. Then holding the brush sideways to his view, he had discovered what had inspired the idea, namely, the long, stiff, hair-bristles which framed the portrait precisely as the stiff, radiating lines of greyish hair framed the original.

By that perverse ruling of fate which so frequently sends people on the scene at the exact moment that their presence is least welcome, Sir Peter had entered Lance's dressing-room just as he had laid down his hair-brush.

"What's this—a picture?" asked the old gentleman, taking up the brush and holding it this way, that way, all ways, so as to get a good view of the sketch.

Lance's presence of mind did not desert him. "It's a kindergarten brush," he replied without moving a muscle. "It's intended to make children—boys that is—

fond of brushing their hair. You can get lots of them at the corner of Oxford Street."

Not alone in face and feature was Sir Peter remarkable. Fancy a child, with its insatiable love of new toys, its perpetual rebellion against "routine," its hatred of instruction, and lack of experience, suddenly transferred from pinafore to coat-tails, and transported from its nursery to the society of grown-up men and women! Such an one might have figured as Sir Peter's prototype in Nature's workshop.

"He is the Prince of Pierrots," some one with an eye for character had once said of him. "His protégés and his schemes of benevolence are marbles and peg-tops to him."

Sir Peter rejoiced in an extensive and well-earned reputation for philanthropy. People were in the habit of coming from all parts of the country to lay before him their divers schemes of charity, and to beseech his patronage for them.

It must be admitted, however, that such beneficent schemes as succeeded in winning his favourable notice, occasionally went into his hands very big and came out of them very small. For instance, a gigantic plan for rescuing from the gutter every little street Arab in London would result in the importation into the Castle gardens or stables of some unkempt, untaught little urchin, who, in the process of his civilisation, would drive head-gardener or groom nearly frantic. And a big scheme for educating the orphan daughters of clergymen of the Established Church resolved itself, in the person of Madge Cohen—then Madge Grant—into the transference of one little forlorn maiden from a scene of poverty into the luxurious home-circle of Upton Castle.

The forlorn little orphan was now a rich woman, thanks to her marriage with old David Cohen. She had her town house, and her country house, her horses, and her diamonds. But for all that Sir Peter did not feel inclined to wash his hands of her. No! Just as he had chosen her first husband for her, so was he now desirous of choosing her second, and it seemed to him that a better could not be found than Lancelot Clive, the son of his old friend, Colonel Clive, and his own adopted son and reputed heir.

Among his many schemes of benevolence, this held the first place; and from morning till night his energies were concentrated upon the endeavour to bring about a marriage

between these young people, an event which there was every reason to believe would have come about in the natural order of things, if he could but have been content to let matters take their course.

"If he would but let us alone," Madge sighed, as now for the third time Sir Peter entered the room, and paraphrased his former question somewhat as follows:

"What is Lance thinking of, eh, Madge, to leave you to your own devices in this fashion? Has Lady Judith carried him off to her farm, to help her count her latest brood of Brahmapootras—ah?"

Madge, not having yet got her breath back after her late passage of arms with Lance, would have liked to answer:

"I haven't the remotest notion where Lance is, and if he never comes near me again to the end of time I shan't care two-pence-halfpenny."

That she did not so answer was entirely owing to the fact that whatever else she might forget, one thing she always remembered, namely, that once she had been Madge Grant, a poor little waif, and dependent upon Sir Peter's bounty.

So she answered composedly, as if she enjoyed being catechised in this personal fashion:

"Lance is, I dare say, in the gun-room, looking over his fowling-pieces, and Lady Judith is not at her farm. I heard her half-an-hour ago tell your new secretary that she wished to speak to him in the morning-room."

And then she went back to her scales, sighing once more:

"If he would but believe that the world could get on without him!"

By a coincidence, the very same words were at that moment on Lady Judith's lips as she sat in her pretty morning-room engaged in conversation with the gentleman who had only the day before been installed as private secretary to Sir Peter.

Yet, conversation is scarcely the proper word to denote talk in which, as the Irishman said, "the reciprocity was all on one side." For Lady Judith was all but stone deaf, and the private secretary, after one or two vain efforts at assent or demur, had yielded to circumstances, and now stood a patient listener to her energetic harangue.

Lady Judith was a woman of between fifty and sixty years of age, and her gait and dress expressed every one of those years in uncompromising severity. She

had a supreme contempt for those who sought by the arts of the toilet or graces of manner to negotiate a truce between middle life and old age. Her one pleasure in life was the management of her home farm, her one duty—from her point of view that is—to play the part of cog to the household wheels which Sir Peter kept in perpetual motion. In face, she was florid and large-featured; in figure, tall and stout.

She towered a good three inches over the person she was addressing—a small, spare man of about fifty, grey-haired and whiskerless, with expressionless features and eyes which looked out of such narrow slits that it was impossible to tell what colour they were.

She had risen from her chair in the course of her oration, and now, fan in hand, stood rounding her periods with sustained vigour.

Her fan was an absolute necessity to her; once set upon "conversation" she never failed to talk herself hot and red in the face. She wielded that fan in no dainty coquettish fashion. In her hands it suggested the whirring arms of a wind-mill on a breezy height.

"I suffer so from the heat," she parenthetically informed the private secretary, announcing a fact which must have been evident to the most careless observer.

Then she went back to the main subject of her discourse.

"This talk between us is entirely confidential, Mr. Stubbs," she said, speaking in a high key as if she were addressing some one on top of a church steeple, "Sir Peter has the kindest heart in the world, and a very wide reputation for benevolence. Between ourselves, I should not be at all sorry if his reputation could be curtailed—this is quite in confidence, you understand—and it occurs to me that by the exercise of a little judgement and discretion on your part—an occasional word put in now and then, do you see—the multitudinous outlets for his benevolence might be reduced in number. Of course, you will have to use great tact, Mr. Stubbs. Sir Peter is a trifle obstinate when once he takes a thing into his head. Your predecessor was a man without tact, and a little too fond of hearing himself talk; and, of course, quickly got his dismissal. Well, as I was saying, Mr. Stubbs—but this is quite confidential—Sir Peter has the kindest heart imaginable, but if he could only be made to understand that the

world could get on without him——" she broke off abruptly, asking the question:

"What is the matter—toothache?" as an expression of agony passed over Mr. Stubbs's face.

It was not to be wondered at that Mr. Stubbs should have exhibited a change of feature, for, all unknown to the lady, the door behind her had opened, and Sir Peter himself had entered the room, and stood listening to her discourse.

It was matter for congratulation that at this moment a diversion was effected by Lance dashing into the room in hot haste, and whispering something into Sir Peter's ear with many a furtive look at Lady Judith.

Mr. Stubbs, being blessed with quick hearing, caught the words:

"Accident on the rails below Lower Upton! Come along at once! I've had the cart brought round. There'll be lots for you to do."

LAMBETH PALACE.

"WHAT brought the Archbishops of Canterbury to Lambeth?" is a not unnatural question for any one to ask as he stands at the gate of the Palace and looks around. There, opposite the quaint red-brick gateway, rise the chimneys of the potteries, and a wilderness of low grimy roofs stretches out beyond them. Nor does the river here put on any gracious aspect—with the tide out and a few black barges stranded on the mud; while the suspension bridge across the river transcends, in naked ugliness, any other of the kind. The bridge, indeed, was not in the way of being an eyesore to the early Archbishops; but potteries have been there probably as long as the Archbishops, and the marshes that stretched about Lambeth, peopled only by fowlers and fenmen, were not more attractive, perhaps, than the labyrinth of humble dwellings which now occupy their site.

But a glance across the river, where Barry's great pile, with its towers and pinnacles, and innumerable windows, occupies the site of the ancient palace of the English Kings, may help to suggest an answer to the question asked above. That the head of the Church should desire to be near the chief residence of the head of the State, seems natural enough. There were reasons, too, why the Archbishop in old times did not find himself

very comfortable at Canterbury, where he might have seemed to be most at home. For the cathedral which was his rightful seat was also the church of the Convent of Christchurch, and the brethren of Christchurch were a rich and powerful body, with considerable influence at the Roman see, and they claimed, according to ancient usage, the right of choosing the new Archbishop when the see became vacant; although they were content, in a general way, to accept the nomination of the King and of the Bishops of the province. The high pretensions of the Canons of Christchurch did not agree with the higher claims of the Archbishop, and sundry attempts to supersede the authority of the Canons having failed, the Archbishop turned his back upon Canterbury, and none of his successors have ever returned to it except as occasional visitants. There was no lack of residences indeed at the disposal of the incumbent of the see—hardly the King was better endowed with dwelling-places; but they were all too remote from the centre of affairs.

The Manor of Lambeth was then held by the Bishop and Convent of Rochester, and was a place of some importance, having, in the old Saxon times, been held by the sister of the Confessor, whose Norman husband gave it away to the monks of Rochester. The importance of the site arose from its being a chief crossing-place of the river, a horse-ferry having existed there from time immemorial; a ferry which probably formed a connecting link in a branch of Roman Watling Street, a short cut, in fact, which, avoiding the detour by the City, rejoined the main line of communication somewhere near the Edgeware Road. As horses and vehicles were ferried across, so no doubt were animals; and it is possible that an annual migration of lambs, from the uplands of Kent and Surrey to the meadows and marshes of Essex, or some other pastoral movement of Saxon times, may have given the name of Lambhythe to the early settlement. The more generally accepted derivation is from Lamhythe, or, in more modern guise, Loamhythe—a landing-place in the mud.

At any rate, the lordship of Lambeth embraced a goodly extent of land and water well adapted for fishing and fowling, and with forest and commons where the hunter's horn might merrily twang. As late as Queen Elizabeth's time, the parish was well stocked with all kinds of bustards, wild swans, barnacle geese, sea fowls, fen

fowls, teals, coots, ducks, and with "deare both red, fallow, and roo." The river, too, swarmed with fish. Excellent were the lampreys of Lambeth.

It is not unlikely that these advantages weighed with the Archbishop of the period—it was Herbert Fitzwalter who, A.D. 1197, acquired the Manor of Lambeth, in exchange for that of Darent in Kent—for the prelates of that age were often keen sportsmen, and, indeed, it was not till that unfortunate affair of Archbishop Abbot—who accidentally shot a keeper with a bolt from his cross-bow—that any objections were made to an Archbishop who followed the chase.

Anyhow the Archbishops have been tenants of Lambeth for nearly seven centuries, and although there have been many changes in the old Palace during that long period, yet it has never lost its identity, and for every period of its existence, there is still something to show: a fragment here and there, a tower, a chamber, a buttress; something at all events spared and preserved during demolition and restoration.

As we view the Palace from the Albert Embankment, or from the river, the eye takes in nearly the whole of the ancient parts of the building. The river, first, we may bear in mind, takes a sudden bend and flows almost due northwards, so that in the river front we have the west front of the Palace; and the old tower at the north-west corner, which is faced with stone on the two sides that it shows to the outside world, is usually known as the Lollards' Tower, although its official name is the Water Tower. It is a water tower no longer, standing high and dry above the river. But before the embankment was made the foreshore approached much more closely to the Palace, and, in earlier times, some kind of creek must have partly encompassed the tower, giving access to the boats and wherries of lay and cleric, as well as to the stately barge of the Archbishop, and to the gaily-decked galleys of Royal and noble personages.

Projecting from the north front of the Water Tower may be observed a smaller square tower of ancient stonework, which is probably one of the oldest parts of the building, and may be part of the original building of Archbishop Boniface, who, in the second half of the thirteenth century, converted the ancient dwelling of the monks of Rochester into something more stately and dignified. This square turret

is the actual Lollards' Tower, for it contains the narrow chamber which was the prison-chamber of the Palace; whether any Lollards were actually confined there is a question for further consideration.

The towers of more modern brickwork which flank the original donjon are the work of Cranmer and Laud respectively, and bear their names. From this point the lower roof of the chapel, which is attached to the inner or eastern front of the main tower, is not visible; but the roof of the hall, with its buttresses and pinnacles, and its quaint turret with the enormous vane—all in the florid taste of the great Christopher Wren—appears over the enclosing walls. This is Juxon's hall, now the library, and it continues the general frontage of the place, till the eye rests upon the solid, substantial towers of red brick which buttress the gateway of Cardinal Morton.

At Cardinal Morton's gateway let us now apply for admission, and we shall at once be struck by the immediate neighbourhood of the parish church of Lambeth, a comely, old church, with its tower and bell-turret, which bears a family resemblance to the churches of Putney and Fulham. In fact, the church was long considered an annexe of the Palace, and sundry of the Archbishops lie buried there with other worthies of ancient date.

But the angle of the wall between Palace and parish church has a morsel of history all to itself. For here it was, one windy, rainy night in December, that Mary of Modena, the Queen of James the Second, found shelter from wind and rain, clasping to her bosom the babe, hitherto cradled in the pomp and luxury of a Court—the little Prince of Wales, in fact—henceforth to be an exile and a wanderer on the face of the earth, and to be known as the "Pretender." Nobody, perhaps, was thirsting for the blood of the unhappy Queen and her babe, but still she was profoundly disliked by the populace, and there might have been danger in discovery, so the Queen was hastily disguised in the costume of an Italian laundress with a bundle of clothes under her arm, the bundle being the baby, and ferried over the dark and stormy river, where a coach was engaged to meet her by Lambeth Palace. But no coach made its appearance, and, in this corner, the Queen sheltered herself from the rain like any poor outcast, while a faithful attendant searched the place for a conveyance, and finally suc-

ceeded in hiring a hackney coach from the Swan Inn.

At the Cardinal's gateway we are almost in the middle ages. There is the lofty archway that admits his eminence's stately train, the palfreys with their purple housings, the loaded sumpter mules; as the groined and banded roof of stone overhead echoes to the clatter. It is a four-wheeled cab, after all, that enters, containing a stout, substantial dignitary of the Church. A smaller gateway, with its ponderous, iron-bound, oaken door, admits the humbler pedestrian.

Some years ago there was no difficulty in obtaining admittance to the Palace, that is, to the historical part of it; but of late, since confidence has been shaken in the intentions of casual visitors, no one is admitted without a written order from the Archbishop.

Here is a contrast again with the days of old. A couple of centuries ago, any man with a decent coat on his back might make himself free of the place, and dine at the steward's table; or, if the decent coat were wanting, there was bread and meat to be had for the asking at the buttery hatch. Mr. Pepys might call for a pair of oars and float up the river with the tide, without invitation or notice, to partake of the Archbishop's cheer.

"All comers," says another writer, "feasted at the steward's or almoner's tables in the great hall. And daily fragments filled the bellies of the hungry poor that waited at the gate."

Not that the hungry poor have altogether lost their privileges even in these inhospitable days; the daily fragments have been commuted into money payments to the deserving poor, and a weekly dole that has been distributed at Lambeth gates from the days of Archbishop Baldwin, the crusader, is still bestowed on selected recipients every Saturday. There is no endowment it seems to meet these payments, nor any legal obligation to make them. They form part of the Archbishop's private charities, continued from age to age under a better title than parchments can secure.

The narrow, massive doorways, and the dimly-lighted rooms within these archway towers, have a chill and gloomy appearance on this bitter March day. But here it is supposed that Cardinal Morton kept house when at Lambeth; and one of the most commodious rooms over the gateway is generally known as Morton's parlour.

Others of the rooms were used for the confinement of prisoners of consideration, and there still exists, it is said, an arrangement like the famous ear of Dionysius, by which the private conversation of the prisoners might be overheard.

The Cardinal who built the gateway was a stirring political character. He was at Towton fight with Queen Margaret in the Wars of the Roses, and, when all was lost, conducted the Queen to a place of safety. Then he made his peace with the house of York, and, as Bishop of Ely, was present at that famous council in the Tower of London, recorded by Shakespeare in King Richard the Third, beginning with the then Lord Protector's gracious and smiling address :

My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,
I saw good strawberries in your garden there ;
I do beseech you send for some of them.

A council that ended in a general scene of terror, and the hasty execution of Lord Hastings. The beginning of a "coup d'état" which ended in the assumption of the crown by Gloucester, and the death of the young Princes in the Tower. Morton, too, was with Buckingham, and the Countess of Derby, one of the chief figures in the conspiracy that raised the Earl of Richmond to the throne, and narrowly escaped the vengeance of his old master, but was rewarded for his services to the house of Lancaster by the Primacy of All England, and the Cardinal's hat that followed this promotion.

Within the gateway the chief object proves to be the great hall, a quaint and pleasing structure of dark-red brick, with stone facings, of the Restoration period—the old hall was dismantled and pulled down during the Commonwealth, and the new Archbishop, Juxon, who had attended the late King on the scaffold, would have the new hall as like the old as possible. And thus there are pointed windows of a sort, and ponderous buttresses, and a high peaked roof, the whole redeemed by pleasing ornaments, and a general feeling that belongs to its own particular age, and to none other. This is the hall where Pepys feasted, and found such good cheer ; and it was used for great banquets up to recent times. In the jolly, unearnest days of the Georges, a great feast was held whenever a new Bishop was consecrated in the province. He had the privilege of paying for it, and of sitting at the head of the feast with his hat on, while all the rest of the guests remained

uncovered. But there is no more feasting now in the old hall. The Gothic doorway opens into a quite different scene from those of its former revels. It is now the great library—a solemn, quiet place, with alcoves of oaken bookshelves on either hand, and a broad aisle in the middle, where one walks surrounded by innumerable old tomes, in the dark, deep, lustreless bindings of old times. There must be a terrible weight of old divinity upon these massive shelves, as well as treasures of old literature, and rare volumes of great price.

And this is a public library, although little known and used as such. But it is open to any student who desires to consult its volumes, on most days of the week. But, in truth, the library has not many attractions for the "general reader," and except for theological students, and searchers after rare volumes, there are few to take advantage of its privileges. But the librarians of Lambeth have generally themselves been men of learning and research ; and the names of Wharton and Ducarel among antiquarians of the old school, and of Green and Stubbs among latter-day historians, are sufficient to show that the literary treasures of Lambeth have not been neglected.

The first germ of the library, it is said, was a collection of books made for Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the favourite of Queen Elizabeth, and certain volumes still bear embossed and gilt upon their covers the initials and cognizance of the splendid Earl. But Archbishop Bancroft first brought the books to Lambeth, and bequeathed them in his will to the see of Canterbury. Some of the rarest of the MSS. and printed volumes are exhibited on table cases in the various alcoves ; a work of the seventh century Aldhelm, supposed to have been subsequently transcribed by Alcuin ; the ninth century gospels of McDurnan, a beautiful Irish MS., said to have been presented to Canterbury by King Athelstan, the successor of Alfred. Among other curiosities, too, is a fine MS. copy of the Koran, in itself rich and rare, and the question as to how it got there is answered by an inscription, which shows how the book was captured in the loot of Tippoo Sahib's palace, when Seringapatam was stormed. Again, there is a magnificent volume bound in velvet, with massive silver mountings and ornaments, containing an early German printed copy of the Scriptures, which may be

called the present Emperor of Germany's wedding fee, for it was a gift from the then Prince Frederick to Archbishop Sumner, in memory of the wedding ceremony, at which the Archbishop officiated, which united the Prince to the daughter of our Queen. This volume was, after the Archbishop's death, presented by his representatives to the see of Canterbury, and occupies a place of honour in the library.

From an architectural standpoint, the great feature of the hall is its magnificent roof of timber, which again is a restoration of the ancient roof of the hall as nearly as Archbishop Juxon could get it. But again there is a floridness and warmth of detail that suggests the period of its origin. Interesting fragments of stained glass, gathered together after the destruction wrought by the Puritans, appear in a window at the northern end of the hall; and on the opposite side there is an opening to a corridor and staircase which leads to the interior of the Palace. Here, upon the staircase, we are confronted with life-size portraits of Sir Robert Walpole, his handsome sister, Dorothy, and her husband, Lord Townshend. These stout, and certainly not spiritualistic Norfolk worthies, do not seem particularly at home in Lambeth Palace; and, again, the question as to how they got there, is met by the information that they were family portraits belonging to Archbishop Cornwallis. The landing at the top of the stairs opens upon the picture gallery, consisting of two long corridors at right angles with each other, which has replaced the old galleries over the cloisters in which the library was once kept. These last were cold and draughty passages, interesting only from their associations with the antiquarians of old times, such as John Foxe, of the "Martyrs," with old Stow, of the "Survey of London;" Strype, who continued his work, and others.

Nor were the cloisters themselves of any architectural merit. In the centre was a pump, of which we get a glimpse in a scene that occurred in the reign of Elizabeth, when Her Majesty visiting the Archbishop in Lent, in her usual sudden arbitrary manner, called upon him for a sermon. By the pump, a temporary pulpit was placed from which a discourse was preached, a crowd of bystanders occupying the open quad, while the Queen, with her Lords and Councillors, in all their bravery, occupied the galleries round about; then, no doubt,

open and balustraded. It was not in Lent, however, that the Queen visited Archbishop Parker, when she was so pleased with her entertainment, that she felt obliged to compliment the Archbishop's wife.

From the position of the cloisters which occupy the south front of the chapel, their usual place in conventual buildings, it seems probable that the original ground-plan of the building, as determined by Archbishop Baldwin, its first founder, or by Walter Hubert, his successor, was adhered to throughout. For it must be remembered that it was Baldwin's original intention to found a College of Canons at Lambeth. Baldwin, we are told, brought by water to Lambeth, all the stones, timber, and other materials prepared for the College at Hackington, near Canterbury. But he had not proceeded far with his work when a papal bull was promulgated commanding the College of Lambeth to be demolished; this project of founding a college either at Hackington or Lambeth having been defeated by the influence of the jealous Canons of Christchurch. But while the Canons were disestablished, the conventual arrangement of the buildings was persevered with, and thus, while everything else has been changed and altered past recognition, the general alignment of the Palace follows the course marked out by the powerful hands of its first founders.

Opening out of the picture gallery is the guard-room, which recalls the ancient militant state of the Norman prelates, a noble hall with an open timber roof, which is now used as a state dining-room and conference-room. And this room remains essentially in its ancient condition, except that the floor has been raised and the panelling shortened, while the old hearth, whose opening, it is said, reached almost to the ceiling, has been replaced by a melancholy example of what was considered a Tudor fireplace half a century ago. But the chief ornament of the room is its collection of the portraits of the Archbishops. Perhaps a gallery of Archbishops is not of enthralling interest to the general public, but a hasty glance may be taken of some one here and there, whose character or career may present some striking points.

Let us picture Baldwin first of all, the crusader, the same who preached the crusade in Wales, and who proved his courage and sincerity by embarking himself for the Holy Land. There we shall find him in helmet and cuirass, with the banner of Saint Thomas unfurled before him, at the

head of his little army of two hundred horse and three hundred foot, and leading them to the attack on Saladin's camp. But he died soon after in the field, and never reached the Holy Sepulchre, the object of his passionate desire.

Then we have Boniface, of the princely house of Savoy, whose brother Peter built the Savoy Palace, in the Strand. He was known as the handsome Archbishop, but his deeds were of the opposite description, as witness his visitation of the Priory of Saint Bartholomew, in Smithfield, the scene of which, the old priory church, is still in existence. He marched down to the City, wearing armour under his vestments, and followed by a retinue of men of arms, disguised under sacerdotal robes. The citizens gathered about him, and received him with hooting and curses. But the brethren of Saint Bartholomew were prepared to receive their Archbishop with all honour, although determined to resist to the uttermost his claim of visitation. The bells all pealed, the organs sounded, the great west door was thrown open, and priests and choristers were formed in solemn procession to meet the Archbishop, and conduct him to the high altar. Boniface stalked up the aisle, with angry face and glaring eyes. All this religious pomp was a mockery to him—the monks should be in the Chapter House with their deeds and charters, their accounts and vouchers, spread around. And catching sight of the Sub-prior in his stall, who was about to begin the service, Boniface seized him in his iron grasp, cuffed the poor old man, and left him half-senseless on the pavement. The monks ran to protect their aged Sub-prior, the Archbishop's men set upon the monks, and a scene of terror and confusion followed, in the midst of which Boniface and his men cut their way through the exasperated and menacing crowd, and returned to Lambeth. But the citizens mustered in force with bills and staves, and pursued the Archbishop's train to their quarters. Much damage was done to the buildings at Lambeth; but Boniface, secure within his stony tower, bade defiance to his assailants. The turret which is still existing on the north face of the Water Tower at Lambeth, was probably a witness of this first siege of Lambeth.

Again, after a lapse of a century and a half, was Lambeth Palace attacked, and this time there was no fighting Archbishop to hold its towers. Wat Tyler's men had just cut off the head of Simon of Sudbury,

the Archbishop; but the popular vengeance was not complete till they had demolished his house. Archbishop Simon was unpopular, not only as a landlord, but as a persecutor of the Lollards. John Ball, a priest whom he had imprisoned—would that there were proof to show that it was in Lambeth itself—was released by the insurgents, and became the apostle of the popular movement.

Another great persecutor of heretics was Thomas Arundel, of the noble family of the Fitzalans; but he is also noticeable as intimately connected with the movements of the times. Richard the Second was on the throne, and was dreaded and disliked by a large part of the great nobility. The Archbishop's brother, the Earl of Arundel, was strongly suspected of having been concerned with the Duke of Gloucester, and other nobles, in a scheme for placing Richard under constraint. How treacherously Richard dealt with his uncle Gloucester is told in our "Chronicles" of Essex, in connection with Pleshy Castle. His treatment of the Earl of Arundel was still more base. Richard, through his brother, the Archbishop, invited the Earl to visit him at Court. The Archbishop strongly advised his brother to excuse himself. He was safe enough in his own Castle of Arundel, one of the strongest in the kingdom, and Richard would find it difficult to drag him out. Still there was danger in declining a Royal invitation, and the Earl declared himself willing to come if he had the King's word for his safety. The King, in the Archbishop's presence, bound himself by all the most sacred invocations, that the Earl should suffer no harm. Then the Earl left the Castle and travelled to Lambeth, where he spent the night in earnest talk with his brother. In the morning the Archbishop, in his barge, himself conveyed his brother over the water to the King's Palace at Westminster. The Earl was received by the King's courtiers, as of all guests the most welcome. The King admitted him to his presence without an instant's delay. The Archbishop waited in the ante-chamber; hour after hour passed, but the Earl did not reappear; only when night came on, did the Archbishop in sadness row back to Lambeth. Time elapsed before the Archbishop ascertained, with certainty, his brother's fate. The Earl had been seized by the King's order, and hurried off to the Tower, and forthwith beheaded.

From this time the Archbishop's great

object was the destruction of the King. He visited Henry Bolingbroke in France, he urged upon him the profound discontent that existed in England, and the yearning that people in general felt for a deliverer. Arundel assisted the Duke in his preparations, accompanied him in the galley which bore Cæsar and his fortunes, landed at Ravenspur with the rest, and followed the Duke till he was able to hail him and consecrate him as King by the title of Henry the Fourth. The Archbishop had visited Richard in his downfall, and for once the impassive mask had fallen from the face of the Primate. He reproached the deposed King with all the evil he had done, and specially with the murder of his—the Archbishop's—brother, after his most sacred word had been passed for his safety. The King, overwhelmed with despair, could not answer a word.

What was the reward that Arundel desired from the new King for all his services? Nothing for himself; but simply the passing of a law that was necessary for the sake of true religion. This was the statute "*de hæretico comburando*," concerning the burning of heretics; and the Archbishop took care that it should not remain a dead letter. Hereabouts the Lollards come in, as connected with Lambeth, and so on till the days of the Reformation. But a pleasanter record is connected with Henry Chicheley, who built the Water Tower, and otherwise enlarged the Palace; and in whose time the news came to Lambeth of the victory won at Agincourt.

The next remarkable figure is Cardinal Morton, of whom we have already heard, and that brings us to the earliest, perhaps, and the best picture of the whole collection. This is Archbishop Wareham, the friend and patron of Erasmus, and a general lover of literature and learning. The portrait seems to be a genuine Holbein, and shows the wary, shrewd, and kindly face of the worthy prelate, with all the painstaking fidelity of the artist. There is also a good portrait of Cardinal Pole, who occupied Lambeth during Mary's reactionary reign. There is more than one portrait of Parker, Elizabeth's favourite prelate, who had been the chaplain and friend of her unhappy mother, Ann Boleyn; an honest face of almost portentous ugliness.

In the guard-room, too, is a fine Vandyke, a portrait of Laud, with all the keenness and obstinacy of his character

expressed in his face. This is no doubt the identical picture which Laud records in his diary, 1640, to have fallen down unaccountable when in his study—an accident which he seems to have regarded as an unlucky omen. We have Juxon, too, of the Restoration, with Tillotson and Tenison, the latter of whom brings memories of the Court of Charles the Second into the days of Anne and the Georges; for Tenison, as Rector of St. Martin's, ministered at the deathbed of poor Nell Gwynne, and attended the Duke of Monmouth on the scaffold. Then we have Archbishop Herring, by Hogarth; Thomas Secker, by Reynolds; Archbishop Moore, by Romney; Manners Sutton, by Sir Thomas Lawrence; and coming to the Victorian age, Archbishop Howley, the rebuilder and restorer, by Sir Martin Shee.

Somewhere we should find Cornwallis, who was Archbishop during the Gordon Riots; and as the atmosphere of a guard-room suggests battles and sieges, we may here recall what further sieges have been set about the old towers. In Laud's time, for instance, the London prentices came down to Lambeth with hostile intentions against the Archbishop, but found the walls too strong for them. In the No Popery Riots of 1780, the Palace was really in great danger. Some five hundred of the mob marched upon it from St. George's Fields, with drums and fifes playing and colours flying, and surrounded the Palace in a menacing way. A hundred men of the Guards arrived in all haste to garrison the place, and took up their quarters in the various buildings to be defended. The mob paraded round and round, but hesitated to attack. The Guards were relieved by the North Hants Militia, who were succeeded next day by the whole of the Northampton Militia. For about ten weeks a garrison of from two to three hundred soldiers was maintained at the Palace, all bountifully entertained by their host the Archbishop.

From the guard-room and galleries adjacent, a corridor and staircase bring us into the most interesting part of the Palace, for we now enter the great square tower called the Lollards' Tower, or the Water Tower, which forms such a prominent object from the river. This room, on the ground floor of the tower, is known as the Post Room; and the origin of the name is evident at first sight, in a massive oaken column which supports the centre of the richly carved oaken ceiling. Tradition

has it that to this post heretics and Lollards were tied up and whipped, in the days of the persecutions. The latest historian of Lambeth, Mr. J. C. Brown, would demolish this story by the assertion that the post is an insertion of times comparatively recent. But assuredly that post has an ancient appearance, and harmonises well with the panelled roof it supports.

In that corner covered with rough plaster, once there opened a doorway upon the river; a wide flight of steps, now removed, led down to the landing-place of the Palace. This was the customary entrance to the Palace in days when the river was London's chief highway. Kings, nobles, prelates and dignitaries without number, have entered by that blinded doorway. There, one gloomy day, entered Ann Boleyn; she had landed from a closely guarded barge, one of the black prison barges from the Tower. She crossed this room and descended through the narrow archway of stone which leads to the crypt beneath the chapel. In the crypt Cranmer was seated as president of an ecclesiastical court, whose purpose was to declare void the marriage of the King with Ann. And the Queen, tempted by some hope of mercy to herself or those she loved, was led to make confession that she had made a pre-contract of marriage with Earl Percy. Then the marriage was declared void, and the Queen returned to her prison, and was executed on the third day after. There, too, Essex landed on his way to the Tower, after his mad insurrection against Elizabeth, and Archbishop Whitgift met him on the steps and welcomed him sadly to his night's lodging, for the weather was too stormy to permit of his safe landing at the Tower. Last scene of all, Laud, on his way to the Tower, and eventually to the scaffold. "As I went to my barge, hundreds of my poor neighbours stood there and prayed for my safety."

Laud had just before heard evensong for the last time in his own chapel. The chapel opens out of the tower which was built against its western front. A handsome double doorway with cusped headings enclosed in a pointed arch gives access to the chapel, where a noble carved screen of Laud's providing shuts off a kind of antechapel. The chapel is rich, gorgeous in colour and in gilding, the ornamentation done at the charge of the late Archbishop. The lower fabric of the church is ancient,

probably the work of Boniface of Savoy, in the reign of Henry the Third. Originally, it had most likely a flat roof of timber, but Archbishop Howley substituted a vaulted roof of stone, the heaviness of which has perhaps been relieved by the colour and gilding of later years. The stained windows, too, are modern; but the subjects have been reproduced as far as possible from the windows of Laud's time, which the Puritans knocked to pieces. In the centre of the floor an inscription records that the body of Archbishop Parker lies beneath. His tomb originally stood in the south-east corner of the chapel, his favourite resort for meditation and prayer; but it was broken open and destroyed during the Commonwealth, the leaden coffin stripped off and sold, and the Archbishop's bones were reinterred under a dunghill. The remains were recovered in Sancroft's time, and the tomb itself stands in the antechapel, with an inscription recalling the desecration.

Leaving the gorgeous sanctuary, the services in which are entirely private and confined to the members of the Archbishop's household, we re-enter the Water Tower and reach the most ancient and interesting part of that structure: the projecting square turret, which probably forms part of the earliest building on the site. It is chiefly occupied by a staircase—a corkscrew staircase, winding about a solid spar of oak—the steps all of oak, old oak rough-hewn from the tree, and bearing the adze marks upon their under sides. They have lasted thus for centuries, and will probably last for centuries more, for there is no sign of damp about the place, the treads being renewed from time to time. And so we mount the old creaking, but not crazy, stairs, two storeys of them, each marked by an old doorway blocked up and unused, and then the winding stairs end in a little square room at the very top of the tower. The room is lined with rough oaken boards, attached to which, at intervals, are a number of rusted iron rings, evidently for the purpose of chaining prisoners thereto. Two slits, for windows, admit a certain amount of light and air; when the shutters are withdrawn there is light enough to read the inscriptions carved centuries ago with patient fingers by poor lingering prisoners. One inscription—"Christus amor meus"—tradition attributes to Sir John Oldcastle, the famous Lollard leader, and, while there is no record of his imprisonment here,

there is some consistency in the legend. For the one unwearied, persevering enemy of the good Knight, who hunted him down and brought him to the scaffold, was that Archbishop Arundel who, in all his career, had shown himself such a steadfast friend and enemy.

It is a melancholy dungeon after all; an atmosphere of sighs and weariness seems to cling to it still. On the edge of one of the boards some poor captive has marked the days, perhaps the weeks of his captivity, in so many notches cut one after another with a knife. It is a long score that stretches out into the gloom, and what was the end of it we wonder! Once more daylight and the joy of life, or a fevered ending in this cell, or a death of torture at the stake—who can tell!

The old dungeon door creaks on its hinges; there is a little grated peephole in the middle, roughly covered with a rusty plate of iron; the door opens and releases its latter-day prisoners, and a cold blast of air descends from a flight of stone steps which go still higher. These are a little crazy and worn, but quite practicable, and they lead to the leads on the top of the tower; and from the battlements we gain an uninterrupted view of all the neighbourhood round: the smoke of Lambeth; the myriad roofs stretching into the distance; the railway bridges, and steaming trains; and just below us the roofs and chimneys of the Archbishop's residence, and the spread of turf, and gardens, and walks overhung with trees. It is a magic circle this, surrounded by the Palace walls, whence change and decay seem banished, and where inanimate things remain just as they were. Then there is the river, with its bridges, and the great pile of the Houses of Parliament, and gardens, and more roofs, and prisons, and the tide bank-high, and bearing upwards a trail of black coal barges.

And turning to descend we see that the staircase is crowned with a quaint little lead-capped turret; within which hangs an old bell, the sound of which no man living hath heard. Tradition says that this turret was a watchtower, with a watchman sitting there day and night, ready to give an alarm of fire or foray on the deep-toned bell. It may have rung for Boniface, when the citizens were thronging up from London to besiege him. Or the tocsin may have sounded when the No Popery rioters were swarming about the place. Anything more modern it can scarcely have been concerned with.

NOCTURNAL BURIAL.

SOCIAL customs are continually changing, and to this rule the melancholy rites and observances connected with the burial of the dead form no exception. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was not at all a matter of uncommon occurrence for interments to take place at night; but at the present day, as a rule, resort is only had to the privacy of the night season where a person is found "*felo de se*," and, occasionally, in case of death from infectious disease.

An instance sometimes occurs, however, where nocturnal burial takes place by way of maintaining an ancient custom. A few years ago a member of the old Dyott family of Freeford, was buried by torchlight, at half-past nine on a winter's evening, in St. Mary's Church, Lichfield. The torchlight procession, customary from time immemorial, would have been omitted by the friends of the deceased; but the townsmen, loyal to the old observances, and desirous of showing their respect for the family, assembled with torches and maintained the custom.

Old Elspeth Mucklebackit, in Sir Walter Scott's "*Antiquary*," tells her grandchild how "*the Glenallan family aye bury their dead by torchlight*," and traces the custom to the time of the death of a great ancestor of the house, who, having died in battle, was buried at midnight by his mother, who sternly refused to allow the coronach to be cried, or mourning to be made:

"She said he had killed enow that day he died, for the widows and daughters o' the Highlanders he had slain to cry the coronach for them they had lost and for her son too; and sae she laid him in his grave wi' dry eyes, and without a groan or a wail."

In December, 1796, Mrs. Unwin, in companionship with whom Cowper passed so many peaceful and comparatively happy years, was buried by torchlight in the church of East Dereham, Norfolk.

Westminster Abbey was frequently the scene of these impressive night ceremonials. Horace Walpole has left on record, in one of his letters, a graphic account of the funeral of George the Second, which took place in the evening of November eleventh, 1760. The procession to the Abbey passed through lines of foot-guards, every seventh man bearing a torch. The sacred building

was brilliantly lighted; but within the chapel of Henry the Seventh, where the interment took place, all was confusion and disorder, and the solemnity of the scene was marred by the blundering reading of the officiating Bishop, and by the cries for help of the Yeomen of the Guard, who were unequal to bearing the great weight of the coffin. A striking figure amongst the mourners was that of the Duke of Cumberland, but lately recovered from a paralytic stroke, and standing, weak and ill, at the mouth of the vault in which, just five years afterwards, he was himself laid.

On another November evening, in 1777, was buried privately, by torchlight, in the West Cloister, the comedian, Samuel Foote, the "English Aristophanes." Paralyzed, and broken down, this Prince of wits had set out for the South of France in search of health, when death suddenly overtook him at Dover.

Another famous actor, Betterton, was the first of his profession buried in the Abbey. On the evening of May the second, 1710, he was laid in the south end of the East Cloister. His friend, Sir Richard Steele, was present, and has commemorated the occasion in a deeply interesting number of the "Tatler." A few years later Steele's life-long friend and literary colleague, Joseph Addison, was solemnly borne to the same last home. His body, after lying in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, was carried at midnight, June the twenty-sixth, 1719, to the Abbey. "Bishop Atterbury," says Macaulay, "one of those Tories who had loved and honoured the most accomplished of the Whigs, met the corpse, and led the procession by torchlight, round the shrine of Saint Edward, and the graves of the Plantagenets, to the chapel of Henry the Seventh." In the vault beneath the north aisle of that chapel, by the side of his patron, Montague, Earl of Halifax, were laid the remains of the great essayist. The Westminster boys, with tapers in their hands, stood round Atterbury, who honourably read the service. Tickell wrote some of his best verse in description of this solemn ceremony.

In a little more than two years afterwards, on the evening of September the twenty-fifth, 1721, a minor literary light of the Augustan age, Matthew Prior, was buried in the South Transept, by his own desire, at the feet of Spenser. Yet another member of the literary fraternity of that

age lies in the Abbey. John Gay was interred therein at eight o'clock in the evening of December the twenty-third, 1732, and among the mourners were Pope and Lord Chesterfield. One other nocturnal burial of the eighteenth century, not in the Abbey, may be mentioned. The famous Dr. Sacheverel died at Highgate on June the sixth, 1724, and six days later was buried at midnight in his own church of Saint Andrews, Holborn, "in a very private but decent manner," says a contemporary newspaper, "according to the directions of his will. Six clergymen held up his pall, and six mourners followed it."

One of the most remarkable episodes in seventeenth century London life was the funeral of Claude Duval, the famous highwayman. On Friday, January the twenty-first, 1670, this accomplished rascal was hung at Tyburn; the body lay in state in a room hung with black, and illuminated by eight wax tapers, in the Tangiers Tavern, St. Giles, where it was solemnly watched by eight attendants in long black cloaks. The lamented cavalier was buried by torchlight, under the middle aisle of Covent Garden Church, in the presence of a great crowd, largely composed of women. Above the grave was placed a white marble stone, on which were the "Du Vall arms," and a curious epitaph, which concluded with these two remarkable lines:

Old Tyburn's glory, England's illustrious Thief,
Du Vall, the Ladies joy; Du Vall, the Ladies grief.

A very different ceremonial was that with which, in the evening of August the third, 1667, the remains of Abraham Cowley were laid at rest in the Abbey. The most eminent men of the time were gathered together to pay a last tribute of respect to one who, as the "London Gazette" of the day said, "had been the great Ornament of the Nation, as well by the candour of his life, as the Excellency of his Writings."

His biographer, Dean Sprat, records that Charles the Second, when he heard of his death, said that "Mr. Cowley had not left a better Man behind him in England."

Cowley's fame now is hardly such as, at the time of his death, was evidently considered to be his due in the future, if we may judge by the lofty tone of the inscription on his urn, written by Sprat, and the glorification of his genius by contemporary versifiers.

One more Abbey night burial deserves

mention. On June the thirteenth, 1656, at nine o'clock in the evening, General Charles Worsley, one of the chief favourites of Oliver Cromwell, was buried with much military pomp in Henry the Seventh's Chapel. It was to Worsley that Cromwell committed the custody of "that bauble," the Mace of the House of Commons, when it was taken away from its resting-place in that chamber; and Worsley's body was the only one of any importance buried in the Abbey during the Protectorate, which, after the Restoration, remained untouched in an unviolated grave.

A suicide was, in old times, buried at midnight at the intersection of two roads with a stake driven through the body; but this barbarous custom was abolished by an Act passed in the reign of George the Fourth, which directs that the remains of persons found "*felo de se*," shall be interred privately in the parish churchyard between the hours of nine and twelve at night.

One historical instance of ignominious burial, though not of a suicide, may conclude these notes. Bishop Bonner died in 1569, in the Marshalsea prison, where he was sent on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and, at dead of night, his remains were laid in the neighbouring churchyard of St. George, Southwark. No stone nor memorial of any kind was raised to mark the spot.

A MONK'S RECREATION IN THE OLDEN TIMES.

WHAT a keen pleasure we all feel—yes, even the most democratic of us—if chance throws in our way some old manuscript, or pamphlet, in which we find recorded the names and deeds of the men who lived in those far-back, grey, mystic ages which history chooses to ignore. Our critical faculty may repudiate its claim to authenticity; common sense may whisper that it is untrustworthy—nay, perhaps mendacious; but none the less we turn its dog-eared leaves with a loving reverence, such as we never feel for the most carefully compiled treatise of to-day. Its yellowness, its age, the very strangeness of its phraseology, and the utter unfamiliarity of the ideas and sentiments expressed in it, give to it a charm that appeals to us with irresistible force.

The other day I came across one of these old records. a sort of diary kept by an old

monk, who lived in York in the early Plantagenet days. It is a charming bit of writing in its way, full of little familiar touches and subtle revelations of personal feelings, ambitions, hopes, and fears. The worthy writer seems to have been a simple-minded, gentle soul, who wrote down each day all that he saw and heard; from time to time, however, just when one least expects it, he is seized with a sudden sense of the dignity of the office of historian to his city and order, and by some chance sentence, appeal to broad human sympathy, or allusion to great historic events, shows a wish to raise his work beyond a mere record of monastic and civic doings. He never stays up at the Cothurna pitch for long, though, but having made his protest, relapses into his usual simple style with an audible sigh of relief.

Clearly the good monk's duty, the task which had been given to him to do, was to keep this civic diary; but, at the same time, he seems to have carried on another work, in his own eyes, at least, much more important. In an evening, when the labour of the day was over, he tells us that it was his chief recreation and delight to dive back into the ages, even in his time called dark, and from the scanty documents then in existence, try to build up a history of his native city, from the days when she was still Eboracum, the metropolis of England, the seat of the imperial Roman power. The chronicle of his own day he writes in the briefest, and generally the most matter-of-fact, natural style; but, no sooner does he turn to the past, than he revels in the wildest extravagances, and scatters around with an unstinted hand metaphor, simile, and hyperbole; all correctness of diction is lost; the very language changes, and becomes a strange mixture of Saxon, French and dog-Latin. There must be some reason for this difference between the history and the chronicle, for the two are evidently the work of the same hand, though working, at the one time, under some restraining influence, and at the other, free from all control. Can it be that, whilst the monk's record of every-day life must run the gauntlet of Refectory criticism, he kept his history of Eboracum hidden away from the prying eyes of his contemporaries?

The historian begins his work by solemnly announcing that York, or rather Eboracum, was founded at the time King David was reigning over Judah, by Ebraucus, the great-great-grandson of Brute, who was

himself descended from Æneas! Having made this statement, however, the good monk, perhaps haunted by the memory of some sceptic's laughter, begins to feel qualms of conscience. What if he is leading astray future generations? So straightway he tries to explain that some have entertained doubts as to this Ebraucus; he personally has none, but still he feels bound to state that doubts have been raised; and then, as if ashamed of the sacrifice he has made to the spirit of the age, he passes on with unconcealed haste to events about which, he says, there can be no doubt.

The first of these happened in 79 A.D., when Agricola proclaimed that York was to be considered as the capital of the kingdom. The scribe notices this proclamation but briefly, as all his attention is fixed upon that time, rather more than one hundred years later, when York reaches what he calls "the height of sublunary grandeur." Little wonder, too, that he lingers over this period with such loving hands, for the years from 207 to 211, formed an epoch in our annals of which any city might be proud. At that time, Severus was holding his court in the northern metropolis, and with him were his sons, Caracalla and Geta, two handsome lads; the great lawyers with Papianus at their head; the Sixth Legion, the *Victrix*; the tributary Kings; the ambassadors from foreign Powers, and all the innumerable, useless crowd which followed the ruler of the Roman Empire in his wanderings.

Severus is evidently the monk's ideal of a King, and from his arrival in York, to the day of his death, his every word and action are recorded with scrupulous care. Though somewhat aged and clogged with infirmities, Severus soon showed the Britons that he was a foe of a very different calibre to what they were accustomed to contend with. In the course of a few months, he beat them thoroughly, drove them across the northern boundaries, and shut them out of his kingdom with strong walls, so that they might no more come to disturb his peace. This done, throwing aside his armour, Severus assumed the toga, and administered justice with an even hand alike to friend and foe. Nay, careful in small things as in great, we find him, Roman Emperor though he was, gravely considering petty disputes between slaves and their owners. Nothing is too trivial for the kindly historian to relate of his hero. He enume-

rates with equal care the acts of clemency of the Emperor, and the feasts he attended, the garments he wore. When it comes to that fatal blunder by which Severus, returning home from a victorious expedition, enters the Temple of Bellona, his feelings are beyond control. The ignorant soothsayer who led the way to the Temple, and the careless attendant who brought back to the Palace the rejected offerings, come in for an equal share of his wrath. Perhaps it were as well the manuscript was hidden away, or what would the Prior have said to his recorder ascribing thus the Emperor's death to the chance fulfilment of an old prophecy? For, so completely does the monk identify himself with the time of which he is writing, that, without a word of excuse, he adopts all its superstitions, and seems to consider that Severus, having insulted Bellona, must of course die. And he does die—not so suddenly, however, but that he has time to give that order which we, of this nineteenth century, find rather hard to reconcile with his historian's view of his character. The Caledonians had again rebelled—perhaps they knew the Emperor was dying—so he sent out his legions against them, with distinct commands "to put to the sword every man, woman, and child of the tribe." Nor does the remembrance of this bloodthirsty command seem in any way to have weighed upon the conscience of Severus, for, a few days later, he met death with the calm assurance of one whose mind is at rest. The monk professes to know the very words he addressed to his sons, when they stood by his bedside.

"I leave you, my Antonines," he said, "a firm and steady Government, if you will follow my steps and prove what you ought to be; but a weak and tottering, if otherwise. Do everything that conduces to each other's good. Cherish the soldiery, and then you may despise the rest of mankind. A disturbed and everywhere distracted Republic I found it, but to you I leave it firm and quiet—even to the Britons. I have been all—and yet am now no better for it." And then, after a pause, fixing his eyes, from which the light of life was slowly fading, upon the urn that was later to contain his ashes, he continued: "Thou shalt hold what the whole world could not contain."

There is something almost sublime in this burst of self-esteem, following, as it does, that piteous cry, "and yet am now no better for it."

The Emperor's last words were the key-stone to his life. When his limbs were already stiffening in death he raised his head, and, as if in fear lest something had been forgotten, he asked, glancing anxiously around:

"Is there anything, my friends, I can do for you?"

But it was too late; before the most place-hunting of courtiers could frame a request, Severus was dead.

Severus's Hills, three high mounds of earth about a mile beyond the gates of York, still stand as a memorial of the Roman Emperor. For a long time it was maintained—the monk, of course, strongly supports this view—that the hills themselves were made by the soldiers, each placing here a piece of turf in honour of their dead commander; but geologists have decided from their formation that they must be the work of nature, not man. Be this as it may, it seems certain that it was here the Emperor's body was burnt.

Even in an age noted for the splendour of its funeral ceremonies, the obsequies of Severus are spoken of as unparalleled. The monk gives a full account of what was done. He narrates how the Emperor, arrayed in his robes of state, with all the insignia of his office, surrounded by his army, was borne in solemn procession through the city gates to the three hills, and there placed on the centre one, where a magnificent pile had been erected to receive him. His two sons stood side by side, and, at a given signal, put a lighted torch to the structure, and then:

*Ter circum accensos, cincti fulgentibus armis,
Decurrere rogos; moestum funeris ignem
Lustravere in equis.*

And last of all, the eagle, confined near the top of the pile, was set free, that, accompanied by the enthusiastic shouts of the multitude, it might bear the dead man's soul to the skies.

No wonder the good brother lingers with such delight over those ceremonies, for the glory of his much-loved city did not long survive the Emperor.

Caracalla, his successor, and his father's favourite son, certainly inherited none of his virtues; nay, even when Severus was alive, and morality and good works were most in fashion at Court, the chronicler relates, with pious horror, that the young prince used to boast that he had never learnt to do good.

Scarcely were the funeral ceremonies over when Caracalla ordered some twenty

thousand soldiers, whom he suspected of favouring the claims of his brother Geta, to be put to death; the natural sequel of this deed was the murder of Geta himself; and when Papianus, the grey-headed lawyer, declined to express approval of this wholesale slaughter, he too was killed. The new Emperor's conduct probably reconciled the Yorkists to the seat of empire being removed from their city, for we find no signs of mourning when the Royal party sets out for Rome.

During the century that follows, York, though still regarded as the capital of the kingdom, sank into obscurity. It still had its tragic epochs, however, as when Carausius sailed up the Ouse, proclaimed himself Emperor, and was slain by his dearest friend Allectus; this Allectus, too, seized imperial power, only, in his turn, to be murdered by the soldiers. Soon, however, the heart of the historian rejoices, for York is again the scene of magnificent ceremonies—the apotheosis of Constantius and the proclamation of his son, Constantine the Great. But the splendour was short-lived, and the period that followed perhaps the most disastrous of all the sad times we find recorded in our chronicle.

No sooner had Constantine left Britain, than the Picts and Scots—hereditary foes of the Yorkists—began again their incursions, and, for nearly a hundred years, Yorkshire lay uncultivated, men asking why should they sow when their enemies would reap? More than once during this time York was set on fire; nor was there any respite to the misery of the citizens until Hengist, having defeated the Picts and Scots, sent his sons, Octa and Easa, to maintain the Saxon supremacy in the North. The Yorkshiremen were too shrewd not to read aright the intentions of these dangerous protectors; but it was not until they could count on extraneous aid that they dared to resist them. Ambrosius and Pendragon, each in turn, came to help the city, and, at last, King Arthur defeated the Saxons and established himself in York. It was whilst he was there that Christmas, by his command, was first celebrated in England. But the priestly chroniclers of the time were far from approving of good King Arthur's idea of a festive season; on the contrary, they raised an angry wail of indignant protest at the spectacle of this Prince, and his Knights, and his ladies, indulging in wild revelry under the pretence of commemorating the birth of Christ. The Yorkshire

monks were evidently not pleasant hosts, and Arthur soon left them, unregretting and unregretted.

Again, in 620, York was the seat of a splendid Court, the home of a wise and noble ruler, for Eadwine the Great, "King of all Englishmen," made this city his capital. It was during his reign that "a weak woman might travel with a new-born babe over the whole island without molestation." But his turbulent subjects soon wearied of the monotony of peace; and rival sovereigns became anxious to cast off the sway of one who, having been their equal, had become their lord. The King of the West Saxons hired an assassin to despatch the troublesome reformer who insisted upon peace and order in the kingdom, and Eadwine's life was only saved by Lilla, one of his guards, springing forward and receiving on his own body the blow aimed at the King. But Eadwine was doomed—neither his royal standard of purple and gold, nor his Roman tufa, could save him. He was five hundred years in advance of his race, so every man's hand was against him. He was slain at Hatfield, fighting against Penda's countless hordes.

Again the poor monk's tender heart is lacerated by having to describe another long period of anarchy. The Danes had taken the place of the Picts and Scots, and were burning and destroying all that came in their way. On one occasion they stormed the city, and put to the sword every man, woman, and child found in it. Fifty years before, Alcuin is said to have had a vision presaging this calamity. In a letter to King Egbert, he wrote: "What can be the meaning of that Shower of Blood, which, in Lent, we saw at York, the Metropolis of the Kingdom, near Saint Peter's Church, descending with great Horror from the Roof of the North Part of the House, on a clear day? May not one imagine that this presages Destruction and Blood to us in that Quarter?"

The slaughter at York at least was real, whatever might be the vision; and, after some hard fighting, Rigsidge, a Danish leader, succeeded in proclaiming himself as King of the North. But the Yorkists, enraged at his presumption, rose up and murdered him. Athelstan, Anlaff, Edred, Swegan, Ethelred, and Siward, of Shakespearian fame, all fought in turn for or against the city. Then Tostig, great Godwin's son, came down to rule as Earl; but he was promptly driven away by the

sturdy Northerners, who refused to submit to his insulting cruelty. No sooner had his brother Harold restored peace to the city, than Tostig returned, accompanied by a Norwegian army. He took York by storm; but Harold as promptly reconquered it, and defeated the Norwegians in a battle just outside the city walls. As the old Yorkshireman remarks, with complaisant glee: "It took five hundred ships to bring Tostig and his friends to York, but twenty were enough to take them home again."

But the Yorkist rejoicings were cut short, for before the feasts in honour of Harold's coronation were ended, the news came that their King was dead, and that the Norman reigned in his place.

We must suppose—though the chronicler never hints at such a degradation—that York, like the rest of the nation, submitted to the Conqueror, for we find that in 1068, the city gates were opened to receive three thousand Normans to garrison the castles. But, though admitted, the welcome given to them must have been but scant; for the Yorkists were amongst the first to join the Danish army, which came to help the confederate Earls to drive William and his Normans out of England. They tried to obtain possession of the castles—there were two in York in these days—but the task seemed hopeless, for they were strongly fortified, well provided with all necessities, and capable under ordinary circumstances, of standing a siege for a much longer time than it would take William to come to their assistance. But in an evil moment, the Normans thought to strengthen their position by burning some brushwood that grew near the fortifications; the flames spread and set fire, not only to the castle-walls, but also to the Cathedral, completely destroying the library Alcuin had left to the city.

The Yorkists, driven wild by what they considered a piece of wanton destruction, attacked the castles, and the Normans, blinded by the smoke and flames, were conquered and ruthlessly put to the sword. Waltheof, son of Earl Siward, was at once proclaimed Governor, and he set to work in all haste to fortify the city, for he knew William too well to imagine that he would allow the destruction of his garrison to remain long unavenged.

Scarcely was the work done, than William arrived, swearing as he came: "By Heaven's splendour, I will not leave a soul of them alive."

But the Yorkists only laughed at his threats, for they knew that, thanks to good Earl Waltheof, their city was well prepared with food and arms to stand a siege. They knew, too, that the Danes were at the rear of the Norman army, harrying it without ceasing. But William was more than a mere warrior, he was a diplomatist of no mean skill; and by bribes and promises, he soon persuaded the Danes to desert their allies within the city. Even then, the Yorkists would not yield; and for six long weary months, William was obliged to curb his restless temper, and sit waiting, whilst famine did the work his arms could not accomplish. Once, when the siege had lasted already four months, William's heart beat high with triumph, for a breach was made in the wall; but, before a single Norman could enter, Earl Waltheof sprang forward, and single-handed defended the pass. He stood there alone, battle-axe in hand, and held the whole Norman army at bay until the breach was repaired. Still the odds against the Yorkists were too great; all that men could do they did; but when, at last, not one loaf of bread remained within the walls, relying upon the Conqueror's promise that they should receive fair treatment, they surrendered the city into his hands. He, however, had but one thought, how best to wreak his vengeance upon those who had offended him; and, having killed the principal inhabitants, he razed York to the ground.

"Thus," says the old author, "was this noble city wasted by Famine, Fire, and the Sword, to the very roots."

Truly the glory of York had fled. Nor was it upon the city alone that the Conqueror's vengeance fell; the whole countryside, as far as Durham, was laid waste, and 100,000 persons were turned from their homes to perish. The lands of St. John of Beverley alone were spared, and it required a miracle to win even that from the Norman.

"This work accomplished," the chronicler remarks with grim irony, "the Conqueror returns to York and celebrates Christmas with great state and high festivity."

Seeing the city had just been razed to the ground, it would be curious to know where the "high festivity" was held.

Of all the Yorkists of importance, Waltheof alone was spared. His bravery had extorted admiration even from the stern Norman, who, thinking perhaps that so formidable an opponent would prove a valuable friend, instead of killing him,

loaded him with honours, and gave to him Queen Matilda's niece, the Princess Judith, in marriage. But William seems soon to have tired of his conciliatory policy—perhaps, too, the necessity for it passed—for in 1076, upon the bare suspicion that Waltheof was conspiring against him, he ordered him to be beheaded. Rumour, perhaps a lying jade in this, says Waltheof owes his death to his wife. It was the first time the head of an English noble had fallen on the block, and the event struck awe and terror through the hearts of the multitude. Who, indeed, was safe if the nobles were in danger? Wild with grief and dismay, the people thronged around the scaffold on which their leader was going to perish, covering his hands and feet with their kisses. Meanwhile Waltheof, undisturbed by their sobs, kneeled and prayed. His devotions were somewhat long, and the executioner became impatient. Probably his position, thus facing a furious crowd, was not so pleasant that he should wish to prolong it; and as Earl Waltheof was in the very midst of repeating the Lord's Prayer, he cut off his head with one blow. But, as the monk remarks, he was punished for his impious act; Waltheof's head was indeed severed from his body, but as it lay there the executioner saw (and every member of the crowd saw it too) that the lips of the dead man continued to move until he had repeated the prayer to the end. That ghastly bleeding head, with its glazing eyes and moving lips, haunted the executioner to the last day of his life.

Here the old chronicle comes abruptly to an end. Is it that times were becoming too prosaic for their history to supply the monk longer with a subject "for recreation and delight"? Or is it that some rumour of the work had reached the ears of the Prior, who, perchance, had no taste for such frivolous writings?

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "*Gerald*," "*Alexia*," etc., etc.

PART II.

CHAPTER VII.

MONSIEUR DE MONTMIRAIL.

THAT sudden meeting of theirs was an awkward moment, both to Achille de Montmirail and to Paul Romaine. Of the two,

Achille felt it most; not that he was naturally a more sensitive character, but he felt that all the advantage of the past had been his, that Paul's loss had been his gain, and that, though he had had nothing in the world to do with the breaking off of Paul's engagement, and had never known the history of it, Paul could hardly, if he had ever cared for Celia, feel quite so friendly again towards his friend who had married her.

Celia had had some excellent reason, her husband did not doubt, for breaking off that engagement; not that they had ever gone far into the subject together, but she had said once, when he alluded to it, that it had been a great mistake, that she and Paul Romaine had never suited each other in the least.

"But, poor thing, he must have been very miserable," said Achille cheerfully.

"I don't know," said Celia, smiling. "I think he knew it was best. He was very nice, poor boy, very nice indeed—charming at times. I should like to hear of his marrying happily."

So that Achille's feeling towards Paul, when he met him again, was one of slightly embarrassed pity and kindness.

Paul's own manner, at first, was rather cool and indifferent. Four years and a half ago his thoughts about his French friend had been tolerably hard; that marriage, so quickly arranged, had seemed to justify every form of misanthropy; but he was more reasonable now, and it was without any sensation of anger or dislike that he shook hands with the Marquis, and received his exclamations of surprise at their meeting.

He asked after Madame de Montmirail quite as a matter of course.

"She is very well, very well indeed," said Achille earnestly. "And I am sure she will be glad to hear of an old friend. What a strange coincidence! This very day she is expecting a friend from England, a cousin, M. le Capitaine Percival. Ah! you know him."

"I knew him once, a little," said Paul. He was very nearly expressing his opinion of Vincent, in terms which would have startled his smiling friend; but he reflected that it was no business of his, and only asked: "Do you often see him? I thought he was in India."

M. de Montmirail explained that Captain Percival had lately come home from India, had found himself in Paris, had asked leave to pay a visit to his cousin. She had written to her husband about it;

of course he was delighted to welcome any old friend of hers.

"I shall find him there to-morrow when I go home," said the Marquis. "There is not much to amuse him at this time of year, but I shall be charmed to see him. You know of old my opinion of the English."

Paul smiled. Achille looked at him benevolently.

"I want to hear a great deal about you," he said. "You look like a traveller—but what have you been doing to-day, for instance? What are all those flowers? Have you turned botanist? Scientific? A professor of some kind, perhaps."

"No, I am not a professor of anything," said Paul. "These things are rare, and interest me rather. But to-day I have been to see Chenonceaux."

"Ah! You found nobody there, I hope."

Chenonceaux old, Chenonceaux new, even then connected nearly enough with French politics—this was a subject that interested M. de Montmirail, and he talked of nothing else till they reached Tours. Then he found, to his satisfaction, that he and Paul were staying at the same hotel. They dined together at the "table d'hôte," and went out together afterwards. Paul told the story of his travels, and they talked altogether in so friendly a strain, that all awkwardness between them vanished utterly. Achille was much pleased with his favourite English boy, grown into a man, and made slight attempts to go back to the beginning of their friendship; but Paul would not remember—would not return to the old haunts of his youth. He liked his present life better, and his present state of mind—lonely, friendless, cold, and rather sceptical as it was. He took Achille's demonstrations very quietly, with a smile, but without much response, only wondering a little in his own mind how the man who had married Celia could be so unsuspectingly happy. Perhaps the very sweetness of his nature had conquered her; for he certainly was one of the most loveable of men.

On Sunday morning they went to the Cathedral together, and afterwards walked about among the old streets of Tours, and stood on the bridge and looked at the broad Loire, while M. de Montmirail told Paul of all the curious things he ought to see in the neighbourhood. Paul said he thought he should go back to England the next day. Later in the afternoon, when

the Marquis was going away, he suddenly gave words to an idea which had been in his head all day, as his kind blue eyes watched the rather grave and melancholy aspect of the "*cher petit Anglais*" he called his friend.

"Come, then, Romaine," he said; "you and I understand each other. I will answer for my wife; she will be glad to see you; she always speaks of you kindly. Come and spend a few days with us, and let me show you my old house. There will be a countryman of your own to help you bear the dulness. What do you say?"

"You are very kind," said Paul heartily. "Some day, perhaps—but not now. I really must go back to England. I have many reasons. But thank you very much for asking me."

"Well, some day I shall write to you in England, my friend, and then you must not refuse me again," said Achille. And so they parted.

The dog-cart had been sent to Saint-Bernard Station to meet the train at six o'clock, but the Marquis did not arrive. Celia was disappointed; the cart must go again to meet the nine train, she said. Antoinette was dreadfully distressed, and her eyes were full of tears.

"I thought papa would take us down to see the fête after dinner," she said dismally.

"After all, mademoiselle, you have me," said Vincent Percival, putting on the theatrical air which Antoinette especially hated, knowing that it was meant by way of pleasing her. "If you and madame will condescend—I don't pretend to be such a guard as M. le Marquis—still, considering that your people behave like angels on a holiday, and that the wild beasts are shut up in a tent—what do you say, madame?"

"Thank you," said Celia, a little coldly; "if you will go with us, we shall be very glad; and I dare say my husband will meet us there. Unless it bores you too much?"

Vincent made her a bow. "You need not be quite so barbarous," he said, under his breath.

In the warm, lovely twilight after dinner, while the gold glow of evening was dying slowly away, the coffee was carried out on the terrace, and these three people, not in a very sociable frame of mind, sat and drank it there. The dogs came crouching, old Di and the rest, round Antoinette's chair, and she fed them with bits of sugar.

Sounds of gay music, shouts of laughter and merry voices now and then, came from the village on the gentle south-west air. As the world faded from gold to grey, star after star came out in the darkening sky. The people on the terrace were rather silent, a sort of shadow of expectation hanging over them, though it was impossible for Achille to arrive for some time yet. His young daughter, at least, was thinking of him, and wishing for him; perhaps his wife, too, as she leaned lazily back, and played with her fan. She made remarks to Vincent now and then, but his answers were rather absent and sulky. Antoinette wondered, as she presently got up, and strolled away to the end of the terrace with the dogs, how long this painful English cousin was going to stay. Well, never mind, it would not matter, if only "*le cher papa*" was at home.

After a few minutes, her little terrier was suddenly inspired with a wish to fly down and bark at something in the avenue. The other dogs rushed after him, and Antoinette, having lingered a moment at the top of the steps, slowly followed them down, and walked across the broad space of the old court-yard, its gravel gleaming in the pale evening light, as far as where it opened on the avenue. Her stepmother turned in her chair, looked after her, and then looked at her watch.

"Patience, madame, it is not nearly nine yet," said Vincent, watching her. "It is not much more than half-an-hour since your pretty *Angelus* rang. Certainly, your life here is very like a story-book."

"Do you think so?" said Celia indifferently.

"An idyl—yes, a complete idyl. Pity I came to spoil it—to disturb the peace——"

"My dear Vincent," she said, in her clearest, quietest tones, "you seem to be bent on disturbing yourself—but, as for me and my life, you need have no remorse at all. You neither spoil nor disturb anything."

Vincent looked at her in silence. The light was growing so dim, that he could not see her face very plainly; but it appeared to him that her looks were as cold as her words.

"Very good of you," she went on, "but it is no use trying to get up romances about me. I am quite happy and satisfied. If I am easily satisfied, that concerns me more than my relations. Now, look here, Vincent, once for all—it is no use trying to rake up things that are past and gone—

the time when I was a silly girl—though I don't think I was so very silly. Can't you be friendly and straightforward, and believe that I am glad to see you again; but why do you make me say all this?"

Vincent was leaning a little forward, gazing at her in the dusk. Perhaps this was the reason that her voice changed, and she broke off in a sort of sudden impatience and agitation, getting up from her chair, too, in a hurried way, unlike Celia. This had at once the effect of making Vincent very quiet and cool.

"I am sorry if I have said anything to annoy you, Celia," he said. "You are very good to me, and I am immensely grateful. As for thinking you a silly girl, I never did; and now I know you are a remarkably clever and sensible woman."

There was something bitter, something contemptuous, either of herself or of him, in the little laugh with which Celia answered him. She walked away to the balustrade of the terrace, and stood there, straining her eyes into the distance.

"What is Antoinette doing down there?" she said; "talking to somebody on horse-back! It can't be Achille."

"No; his train is not in yet," said Vincent, strolling after her, and standing beside her.

The horseman had now dismounted, and came slowly up leading his horse, Antoinette and the dogs walking beside him. His hat was off, with many polite greetings to the Marquise, and a rather stiff bow to her cousin, when she introduced him. It was Monsieur de Cernay, who even now had a habit of riding over sometimes in the evening to see his old friend. He shared in the exclamations and regrets at Achille's coming back so late. Then his horse was sent to the stables, and, after Antoinette had given him some coffee, he agreed cheerfully to walk with them to the village to see the fête; so the party set off together down the dark glimmering avenue.

Antoinette was glad to see Monsieur de Cernay. He and the Baronne were always kind and polite to her when they met, though the intercourse between the two houses was so very much less than it used to be. Madame de Cernay would have patronised Antoinette more, but the English stepmother, and the girl's real fondness for her, were decidedly in the way; also, Madame de Cernay could not quite forget or forgive the childish fit of passion which had spoilt her plan of a charming marriage for the Marquis, and a delight-

ful, sympathetic neighbour for herself. It was natural that Antoinette should like the good-natured little Baron better than his wife. He always behaved like an old friend, and was ready with nice old childish jokes. This evening he was especially welcome, as a refuge, a sort of protection, from the disagreeable talk and manner of the Englishman. M. de Cernay himself was not at all favourably impressed with Vincent. The first idea which flashed into his active brain was, that Madame de Montmirail meant to marry Antoinette to this cousin of hers, who did not look much younger than her husband. He was not long in changing this opinion; but as they walked out of the avenue, and over the bridge into the thronged and lighted village street, he politely offered his arm to Antoinette—there was no knowing, he thought, how the obstinate, ignorant Englishwoman might choose to compromise his friend Achille's daughter. Antoinette was delighted; she accepted the little Baron's arm joyfully, and went about with him among the crowd of smiling people, up to the long line of booths with their glittering glass, and toys, and china; the dark, gipsy-looking sellers; the spinning lottery-wheels; while Vincent and Celia followed in their own fashion, she looking graver than usual, he a little bored and sulky. The gay scene, the laughter, the lights, the music, met with no response in the eyes of these two, as they made their way through the crowd.

No one could deny that it was a wonderfully pretty sight. Overhead the dark sky, not black, but deepest blue, with a few stars looking down; in the middle of the village the white church, its spire, like a flash of light itself, piercing the darkness. The narrow, white line of the village street ran through its whole length between rows of booths lit up with bright white light, and along this promenade the people crowded slowly, talking, laughing, solemnly bargaining, rashly venturing their "sous," and setting the lottery-wheels twirling for a choice among the heaps of gay-coloured rubbish, which looked in all this shining glitter like treasures out of the Arabian Nights. Sometimes a procession of young men and women, arm-in-arm, would file out from a large wooden shed at the end of the street, where merry music went on playing, and take a turn up and down among their friends in the intervals of dancing. A little out of the way, up the hill by the church, were one or two exhibitions, which

gathered a little crowd about their doors ; these people were quieter than those in the street, being partly awed by curiosity, and by the darkness that stretched beyond. There were "*bêtes féroces*" to be seen here, and a frightful sheet of flaming demons suggested greater horrors still, but was only the entrance after all to a performance of dancing goats.

"Orthodox, though a little far-fetched," said Vincent to Celia, the little Baron, who did not understand, staring at him fiercely.

Achille de Montmirail drove slowly down the hill into the village, into the midst of the crowd. The road was soft with thick white dust, and this, with the loud noise of laughing and talking—especially near the "*Corbeau Blanc*," where people were a little, only a very little, noisier than usual—prevented his wheels and his horse's feet from being heard, so that he saw the people he was looking for, before they saw him. He first saw old Pierre and Suzanne, dressed in their best, Pierre's face at its sourest, looking on at one of the lotteries, of which his wife had just set the wheel twirling. There was quite a curious little crowd round her as she stood there, watching what her luck would be. Most of the people were smiling, some were whispering. Celia's fair face under her black hat looked wonderfully pretty, and not quite so idly calm as usual. Some feeling, some slight excitement, was ruffling the surface ; she was not exactly smiling, but she was a little flushed ; and as she won a third time, to the dismay of the stall-keeper, who broke out into exclamations and loud compliments to madame, a smile suddenly came, and she looked quickly round, with a sort of triumph, into the face nearest her, the handsome, disagreeable face of Vincent Percival, who was standing close to her shoulder. She thus turned her face away for a moment from her husband, as he drove slowly down the hill ; and his eyes fell next on his old friend De Cernay, standing with Antoinette a little behind. De Cernay looked grave ; the girl's face was full of enjoyment. Achille was not the man to trouble himself about the looks on people's faces ; it only gave him a frank feeling of satisfaction, that his wife was beautiful, admired, and amused, his daughter well and happy. In another moment he was close to them ; the slight pressure of the crowd, as they moved aside to make way for his horse, the words "*Monsieur le Marquis*," passed from one to another, made them aware that he was come.

During the next few minutes, Captain Percival found himself nowhere. He stood aside in the crowd, with his back to the light, and looked on at the signs of a popularity the existence of which, in France, he would have been ready to deny. "A great awkward lout !" he tried to say to himself, as Achille, who did not grow lighter with years, got down rather carefully from his high dog-cart. But once standing among the people—a full head taller than most of them, with his handsome face, fine manly figure, frank and open manner, easy bearing, kind words for every one—though his foreign air and chatter irritated Vincent, he could not honestly find any bad thoughts to think of him.

"He's a fool ; but he's a nice one," the critical spectator was obliged to allow. "Celia's taste was not so bad after all."

"Come, we must walk through the *fête* once, I suppose, and then we will go home, if you don't mind," said Achille to his wife, when he had spoken to all the neighbours within reasonable distance. "Business to-morrow, Martin, my good fellow," as one of the officials of the "*mairie*" came hurrying up to him. "What are you doing, Netta ? Have you given toys to all these children ? And your cousin, Celia ?" in a low voice to his wife. "Ah ! good evening, sir. I am charmed to see you. You have come to us at an amusing moment."

The Marquis made Vincent a low bow, and then shook hands with him, while the village looked on, deeply interested. Then the whole party moved slowly on, and old Pierre muttered in Suzanne's ear :

"According to me, it was time he came home to look after his own affairs."

That night, it suddenly struck Made-moiselle Antoinette that Captain Percival could, after all, be rather pleasant. He walked with her up the avenue, in the soft darkness, which was all the deeper that they had left the glittering lights of the *fête* behind them. His eyes were very quick, even quicker than her own young ones, and he could make out the three figures a few yards in front—her father, Celia, M. de Cernay, who had already dashed into the business about which he came to consult his friend Achille. Antoinette had been a little disappointed at first ; she wanted her father's arm, and had found herself half forgotten and left behind for a moment, because she stopped to give a stick of "*sucré de pomme*," in lovely pink paper with gilt ornaments, to old

Mère Clopin for her grandchild. Then Vincent, who was lingering behind, too, came up and offered to carry her parcels—a thing he had never been known to do in England—and they were many and fragile, so that she was very much obliged to him; and as they followed the others, she told him about all the presents she was going to give, and he promised to tell nobody. He admired the glow-worms, too, shining here and there on the grass in the avenue, and he made himself most agreeable by saying:

"It is easy enough to see that Monsieur de Montmirail is popular in his village."

"And do you wonder, may I ask?" said Antoinette.

"No, I don't wonder at all. He is such a very splendid specimen. Of course he has his own way everywhere. I only wonder that you have not made him President of the Republic."

"Mon Dieu! but he would not——" cried Antoinette.

"No, of course not! I beg your pardon. Was ever any one so thoughtless and ignorant?"

"Not ignorant, but very thoughtless," said Antoinette, laughing.

And now they were near the top of the avenue, coming out into the faint glimmer of starlight. Celia turned back to meet them, attracted by Antoinette's laugh, and perhaps remembering that she had neglected her a little. But somehow, though she hardly knew it, she had wanted the touch of Achille's hand in the dark avenue.

M. de Cernay stayed very late that night, having a great deal to talk about. The three men sat smoking together, Vincent taking an occasional turn on the terrace, long after Celia and Antoinette had gone upstairs. When at last the visitor had ridden away, Achille found his wife sitting at an open window in the starlight—one of the west windows of her tower room, where Suzanne had seen the illumination.

"Not gone to bed! Why are you so restless? Are you ill?" he asked anxiously.

"No, I am very well; but I am not sleepy, and the night is so beautiful," she said. "Tell me," as he came and leaned over the back of her chair, "what made you so late this evening? I thought you were coming at six, and I was disappointed."

"Were you, dearest?" he said; and then he began to tell her about his business at Tours, and added, with a little hesitation: "Yesterday in the train I met with

an old friend—a friend of yours, too, once—and I spent several hours with him to day. He was staying at the hotel. To tell you all the truth, I asked him to come here—and then I shivered till he said no, for I thought you might be angry—and yet it is all so long ago; and the poor fellow seemed lonely."

Celia listened, sitting very still, gazing out into the warm darkness.

"Who was it?" she said, with a touch of hardness in her voice; "I can't imagine who you mean."

"Can't you? It was Romaine—with a fine beard, and the air of being at least ten years older. He has been all over the world, and now is on his way back to Surrey. He inquired amiably for you."

"Paul Romaine! with a beard! how ridiculous!" said Celia, and she laughed.

"What would you have said, if I had brought him home with me?"

"Nothing, except that it was very nice of you to think of it."

Celia did not often disturb herself unnecessarily, and she could afford to be perfectly indulgent to Achille on the subject of this frightful indiscretion, which, after all, it really was. She had no wish ever to see Paul again—and the idea of his meeting Vincent at her house was quite out of the question. But she felt securely certain that Paul would never wish to do anything but avoid her.

"We should have been quite an English household," she said, smiling up sweetly at Achille. "You see I have got my poor Vincent—home from the wars."

"Your poor Vincent is rather a ferocious-looking fellow," said the Marquis. "Not that I don't like him. He interests me; he seems intelligent. He entered a good deal into what De Cernay and I were talking about just now—this scheme of a Farmers' Insurance."

"Ah, you must tell me about that," said Celia. "It is nice to have you back, dear friend; it makes one feel good, and safe, and comfortable. Antoinette and I cannot manage to live at all without you."

"Poor little Antoinette! As to you, my beautiful, it is a temptation to go away sometimes, for the pleasure of coming back," said Achille.

Everybody knew that the Marquis de Montmirail, after being more than four years married, was still in love with his wife. "Just like him," said everybody.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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AT THE MOMENT OF VICTORY.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Dateless Bargain," etc.

CHAPTER II.

UPTON CASTLE stood high among the Cumberland hills, some nine hundred feet above the sea level. Above its grey stone walls the Cuddaw Fell rose in sharp grandeur another nine hundred feet, belittling with its sweeping curves and massive crags the stronghold beneath, which once had held its own with the best of border fortresses, and which successive masters with big purses and luxurious tastes had adapted to the exigencies of modern requirements.

"The mountain belongs to us," Lance used occasionally to say, looking upward with a measuring eye to the cloud-capped Fell. "Or we belong to it," he would add as an afterthought. "I'm not quite sure that isn't a better way of putting it."

Had any one asked Lancelot Clive, at this period of his career, to put his notions concerning the whole duty of man into a nutshell, he would have replied without a moment's hesitation, "Get as much fun out of everything as you possibly can."

He had a free and easy way of treating the elderly Sir Peter, which at times Madge wondered over, and at times she envied. But then he was a protégé of a different stamp to what she had been. His mother, who had died at his birth, had been a Critchett, and his father had been Sir Peter's oldest friend. When Colonel Clive had died suddenly of fever in India, it seemed the most natural thing in the world for Sir Peter to continue the orphan lad's education, and, when Eton

and Oxford were said good-bye to, to install him at Upton as his adopted son and heir.

"The young fellow was born to good luck," everybody said, although at the same time they were willing enough to admit that things must have been very different with him had Gervase Critchett lived, or had a son.

Gervase Critchett had been Sir Peter's only brother, who, as a young man, had been seized with a sudden desire for wild life in the West. In pursuance of this idea he had gone out to Mexico, had bought a ranche there and had been killed, there was every reason to believe, in one of the numerous, unreasoning insurrections which the history of that country records.

Lance was a thoroughly genial, good-hearted young fellow. He had a lofty way of patronising everybody, and everything that came in his way which might have been irritating or amusing, as the case might be, if it had been less genially, or unconsciously extended. "Uncle Punch and Aunt Judy," had been his school-boy nicknames for Sir Peter and Lady Judith. It was a misfortune for Sir Peter that his wife owned to the Christian name of Judith, it so forcibly suggested the characteristic sobriquet for her husband.

In the same lofty, patronising fashion, Lance would speak of the old Castle as "the dungeon," or "the jail," or more frequently still as the "whited sepulchre," "tolerable for three weeks at a time, insupportable for a fourth."

It was the grey of the mountain-side which suggested the last unfortunate simile. Seen in the glint and glare of a noonday sun on a summer's day the old Castle stood out in hard staring whiteness against the graduated grey of the rocks.

But when the summer's sun had sunk behind the Cuddaws, and the red sunset flames had died out of its windows, the old house seemed to shrink into the mountain side, and become part and parcel of the shadowy crags. Purple then became the keynote of colour of the whole landscape.

An artist sketching it might have done without his reds and yellows, but his purple he must have had, or his picture would have lacked that subtle yet everywhere-present charm of mystery which only the shadowy purple could impart. There it was, deepening the grey of the mountain, the silver of the overhanging mist, flashing darkly out of the sheen of the distant lake, clouding the blue of the thickest pine-wood, and finding its focus in the foreground of the picture in the luxurious heather which spread itself in straggling patches over hillside and valley.

That valley seemed to stretch away into a limitless distance, until it kissed the horizon. Lower Upton, with its new railway station and few scattered cottages, lay hidden somewhere among its copses.

Lower Upton was about seven miles distant from the Castle "as the crow flies," but a good nine miles if the windings of a steep, rocky road be taken into account. That was a nasty bit of road, especially at midday under a scorching sun, with Uncle Peter "in good form," as Lance was apt to phrase it, on the box seat.

"Uncle Peter" was in uncommonly "good form" on the morning when he and Lance set off together for the scene of the railway disaster; that is to say, he made the nasty bit of road seem double its length with an incessant flow of interruptions or rather what would have been such if Lance had not been wary.

"Lance," said the old gentleman so soon as they were outside the Castle gates, "it has only just struck me that we might have sent a man on to Carstairs to tell the doctors there. Of course, old Broughton will be on the spot, but he may want additional help. We had better turn back and leave a message."

"All right!" said Lance, touching up his horses, not turning their heads, "we'll leave a message for Aunt Judy at the keeper's cottage as we go along."

A message was left at the keeper's cottage, and Lance rattled along over the flinty road for another half-mile. Then a second idea "struck" Sir Peter.

"It has just occurred to me, Lance," he said, with a sudden start which would have

shaken the nerves of a timorous "whip," "that it would have been as well to have left word for the wagonette to be sent down after us; it might serve instead of an ambulance. Just turn the horses' heads. It's only a question of a quarter of an hour."

"Ah, that will do at the next cottage—Turvey, the mole-catcher's. We will send a message back by one of his small boys," answered Lance calmly as before, and again whipping up his horses.

Then Sir Peter had cramp first in one leg, then in the other, and insisted upon getting down to "walk it off."

Finally, within half a mile of Lower Upton, his third and last "idea" struck him.

"I do think, Lance," he said, getting more and more cheery as they neared the scene where he supposed his energies would be called into requisition, "that it would have been a good idea to have told them to send down with the wagonette something which could be converted into an ambulance—wonder it didn't occur to you when you left the message at Turvey's. The sufferers may be too much injured to stand the jolting of—"

Here Lance pulled up sharply. "Ho, there!" he shouted to a man who chanced to be coming along with a cart of hay.

"Who-a, my lass," said the man to his horse, and stood at attention.

"You're going up the Cuddaw Road, I suppose?" queried Lance. "Well, you will meet Sir Peter's wagonette coming down. Tell the man to turn back, take the doors off the stables, and bring them along with him—they're wanted for ambulances."

"No, no!" shouted Sir Peter. "There are plenty of hurdles down at the farm. Are you out of your mind, Lance. Do you hear, my man, hurdles from the farm."

But it was exceedingly doubtful whether the man heard him, for Lance had once more touched up his horses, vowing that unless they put speed on, they might as well turn back at once. Then he drew a fancy picture of the scene of disaster, which, possibly, the railway station presented; of wrecked carriages lying along the line, sufferers in various stages of mutilation stretched on the platform awaiting succour.

Sir Peter subsided into tranquillity, as Lance knew he would, before the prospect of so vast a field for his energies. He buttoned up his coat, so as to be tight and trim, and ready for action.

"If I were you I would let your shirt-sleeves alone," said Lance, noticing a side glance which the old gentleman gave to his wristbands.

Sir Peter looked like a naughty child forestalled in some mischievous idea.

"But we'll take our rugs with us, Lance," he said; "they'll be sure to come in useful one way or another."

But alas for Sir Peter's forethought and prognostication! The little railway station presented its usual picture of rustic quietude as Lance drew rein at it.

The station-master came forward to reply to Sir Peter's queries. The accident, he explained, had occurred five miles down the line. A number of coal trucks had been overturned through the breaking of some coupling irons, and, as the line could not be cleared before night, all traffic through Lower Upton was stopped for that day.

"The worst damage," he went on to say, "was the inconvenience to which passengers travelling North had been put. They had been compelled to alight at Lower Upton, and had had the choice offered them of remaining there for another twenty-four hours, or, of travelling back twenty-five miles of their road to Carstairs, whence they could travel North by various routes. Most of the passengers had adopted the latter course—all in fact except one—a young lady," here he glanced towards the waiting-room of the station, "who appeared to be greatly annoyed at the delay to her journey, and who seemed unable to make up her mind what to do. She spoke with a foreign accent," the man farther stated, "and he was not sure whether she thoroughly understood his explanation of how easily her journey might be continued by travelling back twenty-five miles."

"Capital!" said Lance, "there's something for you to do after all, Uncle Peter. Of course we're bound to offer our services to the young lady. We can drive her anywhere she would like within twenty miles, or take her to the Castle for the night and bring her back in the morning when the line's clear. 'Greatly annoyed,' 'foreign accent.' Why, I'm beginning to feel like Don Quixote already. Come along."

They went into the waiting-room to see a tall, alight young lady standing there with a small portmanteau at her feet. She wore a long grey travelling cloak which reached to the hem of her dress, a grey beaver hat, and grey gossamer veil which entirely hid her features.

CHAPTER III.

THE hot afternoon began to wane. Lady Judith and Madge drank their tea out of doors under a spreading cedar, which made a shady nook on the lawn. Madge brought out a writing-folio with her, thinking it possible that Lady Judith might fan herself to sleep, as she often did on a summer's afternoon, and thus give her the opportunity of getting through a little of her correspondence.

Lady Judith, however, was not disposed for sleep, but for "conversation," in her sense of the word, that is. The number and variety of topics she touched upon while she and Madge stirred their tea, suggested a comprehensiveness of knowledge which would have done credit to the compiler of "Enquire Within Upon Everything."

Madge leaned back in her rocking-chair, indulging in her own train of thought under cover of an occasional sympathetic remark, which Lady Judith as often as not did not hear.

Sir Peter and his fads, as might be expected, received the lion's share of the lady's criticism; thus:

"My dear, if it had not been for me the Castle would long ago have been turned into an orphanage or almshouse, or perhaps into a lunatic asylum—though, for the matter of that, it's half-way on the road to one now at times, with the queer sorts of people he brings into it." And so forth for a good twenty minutes, with brief interludes for fan or tea-cup.

Lance and his misdoings next received, as it were, a passing glance.

"Where is the use," she queried pathetically, "of my saying to him as I do every day of my life, 'Lance, do your best to keep Sir Peter from making himself ridiculous'? Or of his saying to me, 'as he does every day of his life, 'Aunt Judith, I go to bed at nights with Uncle Peter on my mind, I get up in the morning with him on my mind, and he is on my mind all day long'? when he never so much as lifts a little finger to keep him out of mischief. My dear, it's my belief that that young man looks upon life as nothing more than a big jest from year's end to year's end. He'd sell his soul any day of the week, and think himself well-paid if only he could get a laugh out of the bargain."

The mere mention of Sir Peter's name had been guarantee to Madge of close upon

half-an-hour for uninterrupted indulgence of thought. During the recapitulation of his offences she had been mentally concocting an answer to a letter received from her lawyers that morning, asking for instructions on certain matters connected with the Cohen property.

"Dear sirs," she had been writing in intent, "I wish the bonds and deeds you speak of were at the bottom of the sea. Do just whatever you like about them. And as for the house at Redesdale, it may be unlet to the end of time for anything I care—"

She had got so far, when Lance's name high over her head, in Lady Judith's falsetto, brought her letter-writing to a halt. For once in her life her ideas were in unison with Lady Judith's.

"Sell his soul for a laugh—yes, that was Lance to the backbone," she said to herself a little bitterly. From morning till night playing at life instead of living it. Never in earnest—never even seeming in earnest. If he had only seemed ever so little in earnest six months back when he had made her his offer of marriage, how gladly she would have said "Yes" to it, instead of meeting it with the indignant exclamation, "Sir Peter told you to ask me." Then she drifted into cloudland again, picturing a series of pleasant possibilities, if Lance, for once in his life in downright solemn earnest, were to come to her and say: "Madge, I forgive you for doing what you were bidden and marrying money-bags. I loved you then, I love you now, I shall love you always." Ah! how gladly would she pour out those money-bags at his feet! What a heart's delight the counting of her gold, the management of the Cohen property would be to her then. And as for lawyer's letters, they might come every day of her life, and be welcome as love-letters, if only she had the privilege of tossing them over to Lance, and saying: "You'll settle all that, won't you?"

When her wing wearied and she came down from cloudland, Lady Judith had taken Mr. Stubbs, the new secretary, for her text, and was descanting upon his qualifications, or otherwise, for his duties.

"It's my belief, my dear," she was saying when Madge's sense of hearing came back to her, "that Sir Peter only engaged him because he heard from the people who recommended him at Carstairs—I forget their name—that he had been unfortunate in business matters all his life through. He has been twice through the Bankruptcy

Court; at one time he was a stockbroker; then he turned lawyer's clerk; then he went into a newspaper office at Liverpool; after that into an auctioneer's office; and after that—after that," this repeated with a contemptuous emphasis, "he comes to Upton Castle and acts as private secretary to Sir Peter!" Here Lady Judith paused to fan herself, and to get breath to go on again.

"He wouldn't be so bad-looking if only he would open his eyes wider," said Madge, feeling she was expected to say something. "As it is, it makes me sleepy to look at him."

Lady Judith only caught a part of her sentence, and characteristically understood it to refer to Sir Peter.

"Open his eyes a little wider!" she exclaimed shrilly. "I wish to goodness he would! He would see then how people impose upon him, and lay traps for him to walk into, and then make fun of him behind his back. But there—one might as well tell a blind man not to run his head against a post as tell Sir Peter to open his eyes and look an inch in front of him."

They had now travelled in a circle back to their starting point—Sir Peter, and his delinquencies. Madge mechanically returned to her unanswered lawyer's letter. "I don't care two straws," her thoughts resumed, "whether the house at Redesdale is let or unlet, or whether the farmers are paying half-rents or whole rents—" She had got so far when the sound of wheels coming slowly up the steep drive which led through the grounds to the Castle made her look up, to see Lance in the distance, waving to her from his high dog-cart.

She looked and looked again. Was that Sir Peter seated behind? Where was the groom, then, and who was that, all in grey, seated beside Lance on the box seat? were the questions which rapidly presented themselves to her for an answer.

Evidently they suggested themselves to Lady Judith also, for she broke off abruptly, shaded her eyes with her hands, and inquired, "Whom have they brought back with them? Can you see, my dear?"

Madge shook her head. "Another protégé, I dare say," she answered. But the way in which she spoke the word "protégé" was a protest against her use of it. The emphasis she laid on "another" seemed to say: "I least of any one in the world ought to throw stones from out my glass-house."

Sir Peter, in spite of his short legs,

was out of the cart before Lance. He crossed the lawn towards the ladies in a very great hurry, while Lance followed at a more leisurely pace, accompanied by the young lady in grey—Madge could see that she was young, by the slimmness of her figure, and the grace of her walk.

He came up looking hot, and a little out of breath. "My dear," he said, addressing his wife, "you heard of the accident at Lower Upton. The young lady we have brought back with us had no chance of continuing her journey to the North for another twenty-four hours; so I told her you would be delighted to receive her till——"

Lady Judith arose from her seat erect and stately.

"I want to know," she said in an authoritative voice, "whether there are any more coming. I heard that the wagonette had been ordered to follow."

Evidently she had had visions of the wagonette returning packed with lame, maimed, halt, or otherwise injured individuals.

"No, no, no," and Sir Peter shook his head vigorously to emphasise his noes; "only this young lady, I give you my word. Let me introduce her to you."

A few steps behind him, Lance was presenting the lady in grey to Madge.

Madge had left her rocking-chair and the shade of the spreading cedar, and stood in the glare of the sunlight on the lawn. Lance stood facing her, with the glint of the sunshine on his curly hair, and its gleam in his bright, blue eye. Between them stood the young lady, tall and shadowy in her grey garments.

"She came like a shadow between us; I felt my blood chilled," was the description Madge gave of this meeting in after days.

At the moment, however, she merely thought to herself:

"Why doesn't she lift her veil? Does she intend suddenly to startle us with a blaze of beauty? or is it perhaps because, like me, she isn't proud of her face, and prefers keeping it hidden as much as possible?"

As if conscious of Madge's thought, the young lady at that moment raised her veil, and dared the unshadowed light of the blazing summer sun.

Madge stood looking at her wonderingly.

The face that she saw, albeit one likely to attract an artist's pencil, was not of a type easy to class. The features—so far as nose, mouth, and chin went—though fairly regular, were unpronounced: the

complexion was of a dead, unvarying white, which was doubly accentuated, first by coral red lips, next by black straight bars—not arches—of eyebrows, and a thick band of black hair drawn straight across her forehead. The eyes Madge could not see, for the young lady kept her full white lids downcast. It was a face which might attract, and a face which might repulse, according to circumstances; but whatever it might be, it was not a face to be seen one moment and forgotten the next.

"What a peculiar-looking young woman," thought Lady Judith, putting up her eye-glass and staring at her uncompromisingly.

"Eh, I had no idea she was half so handsome behind her veil," thought Sir Peter, taking a steady survey.

"She would make a grand Cleopatra if her eyes are as black as her brows," thought Lance.

"She might sit for the portrait of Jael, who drove the tent-peg through tired Sisera's forehead," said Madge to herself, as far off as ever from answering her own question as to the young lady's beauty.

Evidently she did not mind being looked at, for her face showed not the faintest sign of embarrassment.

But, whether intentionally or otherwise, she avenged herself for Lady Judith's eye-glass.

"Is that your housekeeper?" she asked, turning to Madge, and speaking in a slow, deep voice, with an unmistakably foreign accent.

As she spoke she lifted her full white lids, and Lance saw not the black eyes her hair gave promise of, but large dark-grey ones.

How Sir Peter at that moment thanked Heaven for his wife's deafness!

"That is Lady Judith Critchett," answered Madge stiffly.

"What does she say?" asked Lady Judith, conscious that she was an object of attention to the young lady.

"That she is delighted to make your acquaintance," said Lance, right into Lady Judith's ear.

"Ah, yes," said Sir Peter, drawing a full breath of relief, "let me present you to my wife, Miss—Miss Rosalie," he began hesitatingly.

"Jane," corrected the young lady.

The incongruity of the name with the face struck Madge.

"Ah, yes, Miss Jane—Jane——?" went on Sir Peter interrogatively.

"Jane Shore," answered the young lady. The incongruity of the name seemed to vanish at once.

The dressing-bell at that moment rang out its reminder. Madge thought it best to end an ungracious situation graciously.

"If you will come with me," she said, addressing Miss Shore, "I will show you to your room, and send my maid to you."

"Thank you," was the reply, in slow, halting phrases, which seemed to imply that the English tongue was scarcely mastered. "I will not trouble you to send a maid. I have been travelling for two whole days. Will you give me a bed? It is that I want, not dinner. I am tired—nearly to death."

And the three last words were spoken in a tone which set Lance's brain wondering, his heart pitying.

ROTTEN ROW.

WHETHER in the short summers of our clime Rotten Row be crowded by the rank, the beauty, the wealth, and the fashion of the world's metropolis, or whether in the long winters and winterly springs it be deserted by the multitude, and left to the stray dogs, the impudent and hungry sparrows, or the rare visits of a solitary policeman, it is one of the most celebrated thoroughfares in Europe. Bustling as a highway, or solitary as a byway, it is under both aspects a place of interest to the peripatetic philosopher. The Champs Elysées, with their continuation the Bois de Boulogne, in Paris, and the Prater in Vienna, are alone to be compared with it for the attractions which they offer to the inquisitive and idle crowds who love to gaze upon and criticise the ostentatious displays of their superiors in opulence and its attendant splendours. But Rotten Row differs from both of these renowned haunts in one important particular. London, in spite of the growing cosmopolitanism of its manners, lives as much as possible at home, and Paris and Vienna live as much as possible out of doors; and London, partly for climatic reasons, partly for the incidence of the excise laws, and of magisterial interference with and regulation of the amusements of the people, maintains no pleasant *al fresco* cafés, restaurants, and beer-gardens, where people can assemble to eat and drink, play dominoes, read the newspapers, hear music, and chatter, and flirt—just as their

age, their fancy, or their idleness impels them. Thus Rotten Row offers no inducements whatever, except the equestrian displays of the too evanescent summer, to attract sightseers. Paris and Vienna, on the contrary, cater for the amusement of their lively citizens and citizenesses all the year round, and never offer such a spectacle of loneliness and desertion even in the depth of winter as is presented by Rotten Row in the eight or nine months when nobody is supposed to be in London, except the four millions or so of trading and toiling people, who are considered to be nobodies by the fair ladies and idle gentlemen who form the oligarchy of fashionable society.

When I first in my boyhood became acquainted with Rotten Row, when London and the suburbs which now form an integral portion of it were inhabited only by a million and a half of people, I often wondered to myself, as I wended my way to a morning or evening dip in the neighbouring Serpentine, why it should be called Rotten! But I was not a philologist. The subject, however, remained seed-like in my mind, dormant and quiescent, but capable of growth and expansion under propitious circumstances. One day, not very long ago, the inquiry came back upon me during a conversation in an afternoon's stroll in Hyde Park, and forward to the far more beautiful Kensington Gardens, with a French gentleman and scholar, to whom I was endeavouring to do the honours of the metropolis. He spoke but little English, but quite enough to understand the English meaning of Rotten Row, which he confidently asserted to be a corruption of the French "*Route du Roi*," or the King's highway. That explanation set me thinking. It was plausible, but not convincing, inasmuch as etymologically it failed to account for the middle syllable, "en," in Rotten—though it approached nearly enough to the initial syllable in "rot," and the final syllable in "row"—by the French "*route*" and "*roi*." But the "en" was a stumbling-block to the unqualified acceptance of the derivation.

I had long been of opinion that this celebrated Row or road enjoyed a monopoly of the epithet Rotten; but as soon as I began to investigate the subject, I found that there were many Rotten Rows in England and in Scotland, which had been called by that name from time immemorial; that there were, in fact, three roads so named in Northumberland—one at Aln-

wick, one at Barnborough, and one at Elsdon. There is another near Jedburgh, called "Rattan Raw;" another, also called "Rattan Raw," at Lauder, in the county of Berwick; and three others, of which the names are pronounced after the London fashion, and which are severally to be found in Glasgow, Dunfermline, and Forfarshire.

Of course there must be some reason for the name so widely spread, if we could but discover it; and antiquaries and philologists have done their best, but with comparatively little success, to throw light upon the subject. That all these places are, or have been, "roads" or "highways"—and, perhaps, byways—is evident.

Acting upon, and following out this clue, some etymologists have come to the conclusion of my French friend, that Rotten Row is a corruption of the French "route du Roi," given to such thoroughfares after the Norman Conquest, when French became the language of the Court and the governing classes of England. But Norman French was never the language of the Scottish Court or people, and cannot be held to account for the several Rotten Rows and "Raddan Rohs" which exist in Scottish topographical nomenclature.

Another school of inquirers, finding that the name was in existence for centuries previous to the Norman invasion, think that the origin is in the Celtic "Rathad an Righ," pronounced "Rahad an ree," which has the same meaning as the French "route du Roi," from "rathad" or "raad," a road, and "Righ," a King.

And here the controversy between rival etymologists seems to have subsided—if such wars of words can ever be held to have finally subsided, as long as the daily journals or "Notes and Queries" are willing to open their columns for discussions.

There is, however, a third possible explanation of the puzzling words, which has never yet been offered to the consideration or the criticism of philologists—even of such high priests of etymology as occupy themselves at the meetings of the British Association with the not very important subject of the original Asiatic habitat of the birch and beech trees, and of the Aryan roots of their names. It would be curious if, after all, "Rotten Row," a name which has been applied to at least forty—some will have it, fifty-seven—roads or parts of road in the British Isles, was of Hindustani origin, and could be traced to the very

ancient language now spoken in India, and to the Sanscrit which is no longer spoken, but which has left as many traces behind it in the modern speech of the Indian as the dead Latin has left in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English. That all the languages of modern Europe are largely imbued with Oriental words—Persian, Hindustani, Turkish, and Arabic, as well as Kymric and Celtic—and are varieties of one common and vastly more ancient speech than either Latin or even Sanscrit, is evident to all scholars who have studied the new science of comparative philology. Many hundreds of examples of the fact might be adduced if need were; though the following, cited at random and from memory, may be found sufficient to prove the Eastern origin of many of the commonest words in the English language.

Among others are, "barne," young, newly born, the English and Scottish "bairn," a child; "tala," a meadow, or low-lying ground, the English dale, and the German "thal;" "chalan," custom, trade, invoice—the French "chaland," a customer, and "achalander," to bargain, to negotiate; "danta," a tooth, the Latin "dens," the French "dent," and the English dentist; "haik," a horse, the Gaelic "each," the Latin "equus," the English hack, the French "haquenée;" "kon," a corner, the French "coin," the old English "coign," as in Shakespeare's phrase, "a 'coign' of vantage;" "pad," the foot, the French "pas," the English path, the Latin "pes;" "dinar," money, the Italian "dinari," the French "denier;" "tana," to stretch, the root of extend, extension, and many other derivatives; "gul," a water-course, a runnel, the English gully.

The list of such Oriental roots in our common English speech, might, if exhaustive, fill many pages of ALL THE YEAR ROUND; but as the case does not require a superabundance of proof, I come to the main point which I wish to suggest—that the apparently absurd epithet of Rotten Row is of Aryan and Hindustani origin, and that it formed part of the language spoken by the first Oriental immigrants who subdued and peopled Europe, as modern Europeans have subdued and peopled the two American continents.

In Hindustani, "rad" signifies a road, "den," fitting or capable, and "rah," a wheel; whence "Rad-den-rah," a wheel road or a road capable, fit, or laid out for the passage of vehicles on wheels, as well

as for foot passengers and equestrians; that is to say, a high-road for general traffic.

The learned Camden—no great philological authority, though respectable as a historian and topographer—derives the word from “rotteran,” to muster, whence “rot,” a file of six soldiers. This is quoted by the author of “The Dictionary of Phrase and Fable,” with the additional comment that “the Norman Rotten Row was the way by which corpses were carried to avoid the public thoroughfares!” or that it was so called from the soft material with which the road was covered!

Whether the French “route du Roi,” the Keltic “rod an righ,” or the Hindustani “rad den rah” be really the explanation of the epithet of Rotten Row, it is quite clear that either of them is more likely to be correct than Camden’s etymology derived from the file of soldiers, or the later one derived from the passage of funeral convoys, or the softness of the unpaved road which affords safe footing for the trots or gallops of the steeds ridden by the fair ladies of the present day.

Will no philologist of unquestionable authority hold up a lantern to throw a light on the darkness of the Rotten Row question? By so doing he would interest a far larger portion of the general public than he can hope to do while discussing the birch and beech in Asia.

Let Mr. Max Müller, for instance, speak out on this question, and if he does not instruct and amuse many of the fair daughters and blooming matrons of the aristocracy who frequent the pleasant pathway of the Row, or road, which is not “rotten,” he will have a chance of doing so, for which not only they, but the students of the archæology of language, will be grateful, or, at all events, will have cause to be so.

There are, however, many reasons for believing that the language of the early inhabitants of Great Britain before it was conquered and partly occupied by the Romans gave names, which are still retained in London and the provinces, to many civic and rural landmarks and places of public note and resort. The Old Bailey, in London, derives its name in all probability from the Keltic “Baille,” a town. Ludgate was probably so named from “Lud,” the people—and not from the mythical King Lud; Billingsgate, from a temple which stood upon the spot for the observance of the Druidical homage paid

to Bel, or Baal—one of the names of the sun; Greenwich, from “Grian,” another name of the sun, and “wic,” a corner, the site in early times, as it remains to this day, of an observatory for the study of the heavenly bodies. Snow Hill, known by that name no more, which was no more snowy than any other part of London, but which, in early times, was called “Snuadh” Hill, or beautiful hill, when it formed a part of the primitive city; Snowdon in Wales, and Snowdon, the ancient name of what has long been known as the beautiful little city of Stirling in Scotland, derived their names from the same Keltic source. The gloomy-looking building called Dane John in Canterbury, the name of which has puzzled etymologists who look no deeper than to the Teutonic sources of the English now spoken, is an evident corruption of the Keltic “Dun,” a fortress, or hill, and “dion,” pronounced “jion,” security; and must have been erected originally as a protection to the city, and formed a part of some fortification long since demolished. From these etymological examples of the ancient prevalence in the British Isles of the Keltic and Aryan speech of the early inhabitants, the probability is that the name of Rotten Row is of the same venerable parentage.

CROSSES.

IN old England crosses were almost as common as milestones. Wherever there was a pilgrimage place the roads leading to it were planted with them, as nowadays the roads leading to some local centre are planted with telegraph-poles.

You do not see them in the Eastern Counties; where probably most of them were of wood, as suitable stone was not forthcoming, and where the successive swarms of Flemings, Walloons, and Protestant French had no love for the symbol which their persecutors professed to reverence, and would doubtless help to get rid of it. But in the Midlands you find many, besides the Eleanor crosses, of which Northamptonshire contains two; in Gloucestershire there are several—Iron Acton, for instance; in the North, many. And in Cornwall almost every churchyard has one, besides a large number along both highways and byways.

Nowhere else in Europe is there such a series—some sepulchral, some boundary-

stones, some guide-marks. And so many of them are of such an early date, belonging to a time of which, in Europe north of the Alps, there are very few Christian remains at all.

Why is this? Partly because of the excellence of our stone; partly because—paradox though it seems—of our thorough change in religion. What did escape the spoiler had not to suffer the killing with kindness which has been the fate of too many similar remains in Roman Catholic countries.

Compare an English parish church which has not suffered from the restorer, but which has simply been scraped from the protecting whitewash of "the dark ages of architecture," with a French or German church. In Protestant Germany most churches have been bared of all that could connect them with the past; in France and Catholic Germany the old work has often been overlaid with modern accretions.

The same with other monuments. What poor things, for instance, the wayside crosses of the Eifel are, compared with ours. Here there is no excuse; the volcanic tuff is as easily carved as cheese, yet, at every turn, you have not crosses at all, but rough-made stones in which a little cupboard is sunk, and inside it a doll, or a small wax-work Crucifixion, or something equally tawdry. But this happy neglect of our early Christian monuments does not account for such a large percentage of our crosses belonging to pre-Norman times.

The reason for that is that all Scotland, and England north of the Thames, and also west of Mendip, was Christianised, not by Augustine and his followers, but by Scotie—that is, Irish—missionaries, who, of course, brought Scotie art with them; and this art, somehow, ran more to sculpture than to architecture. In Ireland, before Strongbow, there was little stone building except the enigmatic "round towers;" but there was a vast deal of stone carving.

Out of the whole number of crosses in the United Kingdom, five-sixths are in Ireland; far the most splendid, too. Do not let the tourists who this year, roused by what they see at Olympia, will throng over to "the sister island," be satisfied with studying "those palatial edifices the union workhouses," and the police barracks with their iron shutters; let them go with a guide-book in hand, and read before they go some book like Dr. Anderson's "Scotland in Early Christian Times,"

—more than half of which is about Ireland—or Romilly Allen's "Early Christian Symbolism."

Such crosses as Kells and Monasterboice, and Clonmacnois and Tuam, are not to be seen elsewhere in Europe. Irish people care too little for them. There is too much political gas being always let loose over there for people to care much about such unexciting things as archæology. And yet Irish art, like everything else in that island, has been made a cause of battle. Is this interlaced ornament, which marks the "opus scoticum," whether in the illuminated manuscript, or the crozier, or brooch, or book-cover, or the stone cross or carved grave-stone, home-grown, or was it transmitted to Ireland from the East, through Byzantium—of course by way of Gaul? Partly the one and partly the other. Such interlaced work (none of it so rich and beautiful as the Irish) is found in many parts of the world, and was doubtless independently invented in several places. It is found in Byzantine work, and also in old Scandinavian—"transmitted," says one party, "to the North from Constantinople; those sea-rovers picked up all sorts of good things in their wanderings;" "learnt from the Irish," says the other party, "Norse and Irishmen having been for centuries closely linked in Ireland and in the Western Isles. Burnt Nial of the Saga was half an Irishman; and they taught the Norsemen carving, just as the others taught them to substitute the heavy bill, or battle-axe, for the light leaf-shaped sword which was the old Irish weapon." Who can tell which is right? The Runic (Norse) crosses, of which there are so many in the Isle of Man, have several of them the Irish key-pattern, or interlaced cord or serpent work. Miss Stokes, a great authority, whose "Handbook of Early Irish Christian Art," published by South Kensington, every intending tourist should read, says this knot-work and interlaced pattern is found at Ravenna (where Byzantine influence lingered long—the "exarchs" were Lords Lieutenant of the Constantinople Emperors), in the older Lombard churches, and in those of Georgia. Others find nothing in this similarity except that man's mind and wit are a good deal the same all the world over; "even the twinings and twistings which cover the Mexican carved stones may be called interlaced work, yet no one imagines any transmission from Ireland to Mexico," or, vice versâ. Well, wherever

this Irish work came from, there's plenty of it in England. A good deal passes for "Saxon," and some is assigned to the Danes; but no doubt it came over with the Irish missionaries.

Now, of this unique series of remains the United Kingdom takes absolutely no care. There is one cast of a Cumberland cross in South Kensington; that is all. Yet we heap together "marbles" from Cyprus, from India, from the ends of the earth; while our own far more interesting carved stones—the things that our forefathers revered—are left uncared for to the tender mercies of the farmer.* One or two were set up, years ago, at the Crystal Palace, but that is not a museum; and surely any other nation would have in the national museum a selection of casts of the best of these crosses, Irish, English, and Scottish. Things of this kind need arrangement, and a handbook to explain; and the good effect on our hideous tombstones may be measured by the good already done since some attention has been paid to these old monuments.

Well, our crosses are, speaking generally, of three kinds: the rude pillar stone marked with a cross, generally small, and in some cases later than the lettering (at Sillion, in Cardigan, the cross partly destroys the inscription; and tradition says that Patrick and other Irish saints never passed a pillar-stone without carving a cross upon it); the sepulchral slab, with more or less ornate cross or other carving; the upright cross, like those at Cottingham (dated 651), and Bewcastle (dated 670), and Yarm (with Irish spiral work), and the grand carved cross at Ruthwell, just over the Solway, in Dumfries, to the memory of one of King Oswiu's sons.

Of the first kind there are a hundred and twenty-one in Ireland, a hundred and seven in Wales, five in Scotland, thirty in Cornwall and Devon; none in any other part of England. Of pillar-stones there is no lack in England—those at Stanton Harcourt, near Oxford, for instance, marking the place (says the legend) where three British Kings were killed in the defeat which opened all the Upper Thames valley to the invaders.

* The farmer is not their worst foe. Not ten years ago the Rector of Drumcliff, in Sligo, found an English geologist hammering away at the beautifully carved cross in his parish. When remonstrated with, the man of science got in a rage. What was a mere Irish cross compared with a good specimen of a trilobite? Remonstrance was no use, "Science" was superior to Art. The Rector had to watch the enemy off the parish.

But, except in the two south-western counties, none are cross-marked. Indeed, throughout England, Christian remains of the Roman and Romano-British period—to which this class of stone would belong—are so rare that some archaeologists think Christianity can have made very little progress before the Romans left the island.

Besides the pillar-stones of Devon and Cornwall, the only cross-marked remains of earlier date than 401—when the Romans went—are the tessellated pavements at Frampton, near Dorchester, discovered in 1794, and carefully described by old Lysons. These contain, amid Neptune and his tritons, and other heathen devices, the X P (chi rho), or sacred monogram which Constantine was warned by an angel to inscribe on his soldiers' shields and on his imperial pennon before fighting his heathen rival, Maxentius, in 312. The same monogram is stamped on a bit of Samian ware found at Catterick Bridge, and now in Sir Wilfrid Lawson's museum. The third example is doubtful. Londoners may remember the controversy when, nineteen years ago, in levelling the ground north of Westminster Abbey, there was found under an old wall a sarcophagus with a cross on the lid, and a Roman inscription, which was shown by the shape of the letters to belong to about the end of the third century, on the side.

Does the lid belong to the rest of the coffin? If so, this is the oldest instance in the world of the sepulchral use of the cross; the tomb of Anicius Probus in St. Peter's, Rome, is no earlier than 395. But there is just a doubt whether it is not a case of re-interment. The stone of both lid and coffin is the same, but the cross may have been carved later; and, as nothing was found inside but a skeleton and a few bits of tile, who can tell?

A pillar-stone, then, may be of any date. It was a heathen way of commemorating an event or marking a great man's burial-place. At the foot of some of those in West Cornwall have been found urns. Thus, a pillar near "the Gump"—a wild moor north-east of "Chun Castle," near which is the dolmen known as Chun Quoit—yielded one of those fine large urns occasionally found in the district. Clumsy workmen broke it literally into a thousand fragments; but, by the skilful pains of the late John Millett, Esq. and his wife, it was pieced together, and is now in the Penzance Museum.

Of the next class, cross-marked slabs undoubtedly marking Christian burial, none can be proved older than the ninth century. Of course, negative testimony does not settle the matter; but of one hundred and seventy-nine such slabs at the great burial-place of Clonmacnois, on the Shannon, eighty-one are dated—that is, we know from the Irish chronicles when the men died whose names are carved upon them. These range between A.D. 628 and 1273, but all the Clonmacnois crosses earlier than A.D. 806 are unornamented. If, therefore, the Ruthwell and other North-country crosses are rightly dated, they are earlier than anything in Ireland. About the date of the fine cross at Hackness, not far from Whitby, there is no question: unless set up long after the event it commemorates, it must be earlier than A.D. 773. Of slab crosses, perhaps the most beautiful, and one of the earliest dated, is that at Tullylease (“the hillock of the huts”), in the north of County Cork. The cross is covered with a diagonal key-pattern, and in the four corners are spiral-work circles. The inscription, in Irish “minuscules,” (not capitals) is, “Quicumque hunc titulū legerit oret pro Berechtuire.” Now, Saint Berechtir was one of the three sons of a Saxon King, who, along with others, came to Colman, the Irish Bishop of Lindisfarne, and with him retired to Ireland, when King Oswiu so ungratefully deserted him at the Synod of 664 and went over to Wilfrid of York, who was bringing in the Roman rite. The cross, therefore, unless it replaces an earlier one, must be pretty early in the eighth century. But rude pillar stones and slab crosses, while most valuable as links in the chain of British monuments, are not very interesting to the mere tourist. What he should look for, whether in Great Britain or Ireland, are the upright crosses, of which at Llantwit Major, in Glamorgan—the “Llan,” or sacred enclosure, of Saint Illtudus—there are two splendid examples (in the church), probably about A.D. 850. There is a similar cross, with very rich Scotie work, at Margam, in the same county, bearing the specially Irish formula: “Ennian made this cross of Christ for Guogoret’s soul.”

At Sandbach, in Cheshire, are two market-crosses, one of which has a curious carving of the Crucifixion, the Christ being clothed after the Saxon type, with only a waist-cloth; whereas on the Irish crosses—and on those in Great Britain of Scotie

(that is, Irish) type—the Christ is always clothed in a garment reaching to the ankles (Rev. i. 13). Sometimes this is embroidered; in the Athlone bronze, now in the Royal Irish Academy’s Museum, besides the embroidery, there is a spiral-work breast-plate, reminding one of the other words in Revelation: “Girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”

The most elaborate instance of this ornamented Crucifixion garb is on a slab cross in the old chapel on the Calf of Man. This is not Norse, like most of the very numerous Manx crosses, but clearly Scotie; and not the body of the robe only, but the long sleeves and head-dress, are covered with every kind of spiral, key-pattern, knot-work—the whole scene being as much conventionalised as it is even in the most typical Irish manuscripts (I name the Psalter of St. John’s, Cambridge, as one of the most accessible). It is curious to note a gradual shortening of the Lord’s robe in so-called “Saxon” sculptures. On a slab at Daglingworth, in Gloucestershire, it reaches well below the knees; at Ramsey Abbey it is considerably above them. In contrast with this conventionalism—which in some Scotie manuscripts reaches such a point that the ears of the Lord are turned into beautiful spirals, the result being something like the fanciful Mexican carving—is the realism which depicts the blood from the Christ’s side striking the eye of the soldier that pierced Him.

Of the thirty high crosses at present remaining in Ireland, be sure to see those at Clonmacnois (where, as was said, there is a whole series of slabs and uprights from A.D. 628 to 1273, after which date the barbarism resulting from the repeated English invasions almost put a stop to artistic work); those at Monasterboice (near Drogheda—what a wonderful two days you may have exploring the Boyne battlefield, visiting the New Grange tumuli, and studying the three crosses!). See also those at Tuam, and at Kells. Cong (quaint little town on Lough Corrib, with a river that flows underground through grand caves), gives its name to a famous gold cross (date 1132) which is not there, but in the Royal Irish Society’s Museum. These are enough to show that the idea of the Crucifixion (and probably of vicarious sacrifice) impressed itself very strongly on the Gaelic mind from the eighth century onward. For all these are not crosses only, but crucifixes; it is one thing to

stamp a cross on your own gravestone, or on somebody else's memorial stone, and quite another to set up a carving of the scene on Calvary. We may, without being fanciful, roughly divide Christian symbolism into three eras; the earliest (Roman mostly) in which the favourite subjects are Daniel among the lions, as a type of Christ the Good Shepherd, etc. Then in the fourth century come in the pictures of the Lord's bodily suffering as apart from the objects for which the death was undergone; and yet (as on the Athlone bronze) often strangely mixing with the present suffering the glory which was to be hereafter; this is so largely represented in Irish work that we may almost call it a Celtic development. With the Christianising of the northern nations comes in a new subject—the tortures of the damned, and such like, so frequently treated of in later mediæval art.

Of the two perfect crosses at Monasterboice, the greater is twenty-seven feet high; the smaller, which is as perfect as when it left the sculptor's hand, measures fifteen feet. Note the sharpness of the work, and the beauty of execution of the numerous figures. These are important as showing the Irish costumes, lay and clerical, early in the tenth century—a thing to be borne in mind by those who look on the early Irish as a set of savages, who had not even the woad with which the old Britons adorned themselves. The carving on the Kells cross is much rougher (worse stone, for one thing). On the Christ's head sits a bird, probably the Holy Ghost. Above the Christ in Glory (a subject on most Irish high crosses), who holds in one hand the cross of His passion, in the other the floriated sceptre of His triumph, is "a lamb as it had been slain." On both this and the lesser Monasterboice cross is figured the Temptation. The Adoration of the Magi (the only example in Irish art) is given at Monasterboice; at Kells, David tearing the heart out of the lion, from whom he has already rescued a lamb; in both Isaac's sacrifice—at Monasterboice Abraham with beard and long moustache, as Adam also is in the Temptation. At Kells, both Adam and Abraham have smooth faces. The most curious of the Kells sculptures is Daniel, a colossal figure, bound with what in Irish is called "the three smalls"—small of back, wrists, and ankles—and licked affectionately by two lions. Just below are the three children in the furnace, out of which the flames are

leaping on the men who feed it with extra logs.

Moone Abbey, near Athay, in Kildare, has a splendid granite cross, thirteen feet high, with many sculptures—amongst them a much more uncomfortably situated Daniel. Round him six lions stand, open-mouthed and snarling.

On the cross at Meigle, in Perthshire, there are four lions; Daniel is stroking two of them, and two are affectionately licking him. Another Irish cross, at Castle-dermot, in the same county as Moone Abbey, has a very quaint sculpture of the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

The bird with a round cake in its mouth flying down between two men holding pastoral staves—seated in one, standing in the other of the two Kells crosses—is supposed to represent Saint Paul and Saint Anthony, according to the legend, breaking bread in the desert. But it is needless to say more about the details of these sculptures; there is nothing else in Europe like them; they have not the beauty of the frieze of the Parthenon, but they should have for us an interest which no other sculptures can have. They show the feeling of our forefathers in both islands respecting the highest things, and how far they were able to express that feeling on stone. Let every visitor to Ireland see some of them. Ardbreccan Cross, at Olympia, is all very well as a what to curiosity, but it is far from being one of the best.

Kells (after which is named "the Book," finest of Irish illuminated manuscripts, now in Trinity College, Dublin, Library), is in many ways worth a visit; so still more is Monasterboice—or rather Drogheda, to which it is very near. Of books there are Dr. Anderson's aforesaid, O'Neill's "Irish Crosses;" and for England Lyson's, and "The Old Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England." Stuart's "Sculptured Stones" is also an excellent book. But to the mere tourist, his "Murray" will give all he wants—will point him to the fine cross of Eyam, in Derbyshire, for instance, and to the still remaining Eleanor crosses, which the art-critic will contrast with the Irish work a century earlier.

Plenty has been written on the subject: an interest in it is what is wanting. There are many people to whom an old cross is just three or four bits of carved stone and nothing more; they would not go half-a-mile out of their way to see the finest that the United Kingdom has to show. Others, again, think them "rem-

nants of a debasing superstition," and would not lift a finger to save them from the hands of the farmer, or of that more dangerous foe the geologist.

But those who hold that there is a connection between the progress of a nation and its mind as expressed in art will draw, and photograph, and study, and compare any crosses they may come across. They will be astonished at the number, and delighted with the quaint richness of very many of them.

FROM AFRICA, DIRECT.

QUIET and tranquil is the aspect of the docks this sunshiny morning. The long lines of wharves and warehouses are but thinly tenanted; the forest of masts which once might have been seen about here has marched off bodily, like Birnam Wood, and what remains is but a grove—a sprinkling of ships, with here and there a barge; while, on the smooth surface of the water, a sailor sculling a ship's boat from wharf to wharf is making more disturbance than any other object in the scene.

The east wind which has been blowing so persistently these many weeks has something to do with this abnormal quietude. The big sailing-ships, homeward bound, hang in the Chops of the Channel; and there they may hang, beating to and fro like Vanderdecken on his last voyage, for any prospect of a propitious change. So long has the wind sat in this particular quarter, east-north-east, a flavour of iceberg mingled with the sterile breath of the desert, that the weather-vane on the pier-head seems to have rusted in that position, and takes no notice of any false, deceptive puffs and twists of wind from other quarters. But, alas! from whatever point the wind may blow, it will never bring back that cloud of white sails, that tangled forest of masts and rigging, that came and went with wind and tide.

Still, there are sailing-ships—here is a dock that holds twenty or more—Australian liners, with topmasts struck, and spars pointing in all directions; ships that make the long voyage out by the Cape of Good Hope, and sometimes run homewards by way of dreary Cape Horn; stout and speedy ships, with no engines to rust nor boilers to burst, and with no steam-winch to exasperate the nerves, but where everything is done with the good old "Yo. heave ho!" as

blocks rattle, and ropes are hauled, and the wind whistles in the rigging.

Perhaps, after all, the sailing-ship has still a future. Steam has done its best, or its worst, but it has not yet knocked all the primitive forces of nature out of time. There are still the wind that blows and the ship that goes; and you can have the wind for nothing, while steam costs so much a pound-pressure. Anyhow, here are ships taking in cargo, others fitting up their 'tween-decks with bunks and berths for emigrants, one or two with the Blue Peter flying, and crews already on board, while the Captain is making up his accounts with the ship's husband, and passengers are talking to their friends who have come to take a last look at them. For the passengers who go in sailing-ships are generally away for a life-time.

But with all this the place is still tranquil and quiet; the steam cranes are silent; the winches are at rest; the knot of labourers gathered outside the dock gates is greater in number than those who are actively employed within; there are no trucks rolling about the tram-lines; no fussy locomotives threaten to overwhelm the loiterer. For all this worry and trouble you must go to the newer docks, which lie further down the river.

Then the scene changes; a little further, and we reach the outer basin of the East India Docks. Here the world moves again at the rattling pace of steam. A great steamship is loading in the basin: chains are rattling; the donkey-engine is at work; crates and cases are swinging high over head, or whirling downwards into the cavernous hold of the big ship. A string of carts and vans are drawn up in the road that leads to the wharf; cases, packages, crates, are lying in piles upon the warehouse floor. All these things are for Africa; it is the Cape mail steamer which is lying alongside. She bears the name of one of our historic castles, and like a floating castle she towers over the dock-side. Her bridge, her wheel-house, her huge funnels, her deck cabins, her swinging boats, the great ventilating shafts, the derricks, the whirling machinery—all this gives an impression of the complicated structure of this floating castle, an ocean steamer of the modern type, with the force and strength to face the fiercest storm, and yet capable of providing all the amenities of civilized life for hundreds upon hundreds of guests, with a table such as was never spread in the most hospitable

of the castles of old ; while the whole vast structure can be handled like a cock-boat under the direction of one guiding will.

But not for us the outward mail steamer, although the temptation is not small to leave behind the east-north-east and the half-hearted sunshine for the orange groves of Lisbon, or the mild, soothing breezes of Madeira ; or, perhaps, to touch at the Grand Canaries, with a flying visit to St. Helena, and a glimpse at Longwood and the empty grave of Napoleon, and then, sighting the shores of the Great Dark Continent, to drop anchor in Table Bay, with Cape Town shining forth from its tropic groves, with the vast bulk of the Table Mountains rising behind. And, sailing still onward you may make acquaintance with the English settlements along the coast, with Port Elizabeth and East London—not so closely packed as this East London of ours—with Natal, and Portuguese Delagoa Bay. Ah ! then, to be five-and-twenty once more, with a light heart and a strong pair of arms ; and hey for the goldfields ! Or, there is the land of wool for those who would be gentle shepherds, or the land of ostriches for those of a more feather-brained turn ; and the open veldt stretches far away into those undiscovered regions about which still hangs the glamour of mystery and doubt. This way, too, for East Africa, for Inhambane, Chiloane, Quilimane, and Mozambique—names which recall the sonorous roll of Milton's epic, as he describes the kingdoms of the world stretched beneath the prophetic eye of the great patriarch Adam.

But all these regions to which the gang-way of the big steamer invites us—a flying bridge which unites such distant climes—these regions brought so strangely near to the imagination by the sight of the ship which will so soon be on its way thither—now fade into the distance. For our way is to the pier-head, not to speed the parting ship, but to welcome the approaching one.

Her homeward voyage has been watched for by many friendly eyes. Out of two or three hundred passengers, how few there are who have not a friend or two to take an interest in their arrival, all the way from Africa ; and to these friends for a few weeks the "mail and shipping" news in the morning papers has assumed a new interest and significance. From port to port the vessel's progress has been traced : now she has touched at St. Helena ; anon she is telegraphed from Madeira ; and after that

it is not many days before you read, half-awake, perhaps, as the morning news-sheet is brought to the complaining sluggard : "Plymouth.—The ——— Castle from East Africa and the Cape. Landed mails and passengers, and proceeded for London." And indeed ere long the postman with his sharp double knock drops into the letter-box your correspondence from Madagascar and Mozambique. There is a scrawl, too, from your brother-in-law, Jack Brown, written at Plymouth, on board ship : "Meet me at the docks, old chap, and help us along with Kittie and the children."

There is no time to be lost, for with the steamer at Plymouth yesterday, she will be in the docks to-day.

Thus it is we find ourselves on the pier-head of the East India Dock, the water still low, but the tide fairly turned, and making up the river, charged with incoming fleets. The grand old river lies before us, with a steely glitter on its ripples, the wide reach of turbid waters shut in below by the low hills of the Kentish shore, while above it is lost in the vague haze that encompasses the Isle of Dogs. There is the stretch of wharf close at hand, the piles and timbers rising high above the tide, with river steamers touching and departing ; the square, solid railway-station, and more flimsy buildings scattered about ; with a low marshy shore opposite, jagged with the roofs of shanties and rough buildings of all kinds.

With the freshening tide come a whole fleet of hay-boats, spreading their great red sails to the wind ; and river tugs, with long lines of barges trailing after them, travel noisily along. Then, out of a cloud of smoke and steam, comes the great, floating castle, with a busy tug at hand to help it round the corners. She stops, and the white steam rushes forth with a mighty roar.

Now the tug begins to justify its name, and, with a hawser on shore and the tug hauling away, the big ship soon swings round, her long journey come to an end ; and thus she forges slowly towards the dock-head, while flying hand-lines threaten to decapitate unwary spectators, and huge hawsers are hauled ashore and taken a turn or two round the big iron drums which are set in motion by hydraulic power ; and so, with a haul here, and a pull there, the iron wall of the ship glides against the wooden wall of the dock, and the word may be given, "Alongside." Alongside, but not

inside; for there is not as yet depth enough of water in the river to float her into her berth.

By this time, as may be supposed, the ship's passengers have put themselves in evidence. There are rows of faces looking over the bulwarks; people are clustering behind the poop, or looking out from the saloon deck; children are scampering up and down, and clambering about, looking with all their eyes at the scene about them. Perhaps it is not very much to see, this Blackwall Reach, with its low shores and ragged edge of wharves and storehouses; its suggestions of "England, home, and beauty" may be rather indirect ones; still, it is home all the same—the old motherland, that opens her arms to her returning wanderers.

Now that faces can be recognised on board and ashore, people are looking anxiously about for signs of recognition. But the boat is before her time (the biggest steamer in the world would be but a "boat" in sea-going vernacular), and as the boat has come alongside so unexpectedly early there are not many here to meet her. There are rough, weather-beaten faces forward—men who look like miners and diggers, and of whom one would like to ask how they fared out yonder, and whether they have made a pile, or whether they have come home with just what they carry on their backs. There are babes in arms, too, and brown nurses, with pleasant aquiline features; tall, military figures; women in all kinds of wraps; but everybody browned and sallowd by the sun.

Thickest of all is the cluster about the captain's cabin, where that son of the sea, with a jolly, smiling face, stands at the door holding a regular levée, as passengers come up one after the other to congratulate him on the speedy passage, to shake hands, and bid good-bye.

Before long a gangway has been rigged up between shore and ship, and a detachment of official people go on board—Custom-house officers with lanterns and note-books, who perhaps are going to rummage the boat from stem to stern, though what they expect to find in the way of contraband from Africa it would be hard to say. Do they manufacture eau-de-Cologne at the gold-diggings, or is Zululand famous for its liqueurs? And then some one suggests tobacco. Yes, they do grow tobacco, these Africans, along the south coast, and we shall presently be smoking our *Cana cigars*, and honey-dew from East

London; but it is not much of an article of commerce as yet. And after the Customs marches a detachment of dock labourers, each with a badge on his arm, and "Baggage" marked thereon in red letters, the envy of the unemployed who are waiting on the chance of a job at the dock-gates. And now there is a chance for passengers who are in a hurry to reach boat or train to land and get away. Here is a young fellow who has come from Africa with only a portmanteau to worry him, which he slings on his shoulder, and so away till he meets the policeman at the gate, who examines critically his baggage-pass, questions its completeness, calls in the advice of his superior officer, and finally lets the youth go rejoicing—happy youth! who catches a train next moment, and is hurried off to Fenchurch Street.

The next to emerge are three jolly souls, brown and ruddy and stout, who scamper down the planks like so many schoolboys; and catching a friend by the arm, a friend also ruddy and stout, who has just come to meet them, they all dart off on a bee-line—whither? We will hazard a shrewd guess that the bee-line points in the direction of the nearest "pub," and that one and all mean a drink in the freedom and luxuriance of an English bar. It is an amiable weakness that, shared by many who have long been exiled from their native land. It is an example, too, which Jack Brown might be tempted to follow, who has recognised his brother-in-law by this time, and helped to haul him over the ship's side. But here his wife's sisters come fluttering along from who knows where, and there is such a general kissing and laughing and crying, such hugging of the children and squeezing of that latest African product, the baby, that the male spectators stand by abashed, and repent of their first hasty impulses. And, apart from such impulses, Jack is in no hurry to go ashore. "It is like breaking up your home and being turned adrift in the world," he says, and he watches his piles of baggage, as they accumulate, with a heavy heart.

While we have been talking, the tide, which waits for no man, has been making up for lost time; foot after foot, it has swallowed up the figures on the gauge by the outer sill of the dock. There is seven-and-twenty feet by the mark outside, and within the dock-gates the water is only three feet higher.

"She'll do now," cries the harbour

master, who has now taken the command, and the dock attendants run to open the sluices; and before long, with the rise of the tide, the river is higher than the dock, and pushes gently against the great iron gates; and the tug, which we thought had gone home again, makes its appearance once more and takes the floating castle by the stern, and the drums on shore revolve and haul away at her head till her nose is fairly within the dock walls, and we only wait for the gates to swing open before us. The lovely Thames water, imprisoned in that dock for twelve hours, has deposited such a thickness of sediment against the dock gates that a pressure of a dozen tons or so on the square inch—or maybe on the square foot—fails to move them; but, with backing and stopping, and then taking a run, the hydraulic machinery manages the business at last, and all is clear in front of us.

"Now then, steamer!" cries the man at the handles of the hydraulic pump. He does not mean us; we are only a "boat." But, obedient to his call, the little "Mosquito," the harbour tug, runs forward, and, laying hold of a hawser, pulls away till she almost pulls herself out of the water, and in we go, like a cork into the neck of a bottle. We squeeze a few fat and rosy "fenders" into the shape of pancakes on the passage, and then we are fairly bottled; and, with more hauling of hawsers, and with now a pull and now a push from the hardy little "Mosquito," we are fairly secured in our berth.

And now the voyage is indeed finished; and after the ease and tranquillity of the ocean voyage, where there were no cares and troubles, and every want was attended to—sooner or later—now comes the struggle and push and elbowing of life ashore. A great slide is run out, and the huge piles of baggage are run quickly ashore and into the shelter of a roomy warehouse. And here the late passengers assemble and gossip for awhile, shake hands with the comrades and friends of a voyage, and collect their belongings. Everything is arranged alphabetically, and Brown finds all his lumber accumulating under a big letter B; and then, through the warehouse door, you get a glimpse of a quiet dock-side street, with cabs waiting and driving off.

And this is the gate of the great White Man's Land, the door of communication between England and Africa.

STARLIGHT DREAMS.

EIGHTEEN years ago, John Tyndall delivered, before the British Association at Liverpool, a most remarkable discourse. "The Scientific Use of the Imagination," in which he says: "There are Tories even in science, who regard imagination as a faculty to be feared and avoided, rather than employed. They had observed its action in weak vessels, and were duly impressed by its disasters. But they might with equal justice point to exploded boilers as an argument against the use of steam. Bounded and conditioned by co-operate Reason, imagination becomes the mightiest instrument of the physical discoverer. Newton's passage from a falling apple to a falling moon, was a leap of the imagination. And in much that has been recently said about protoplasm and life, we have the outgoings of the imagination guided and controlled by the known analogies of science. In fact, without this power, our knowledge of nature would be a mere tabulation of coexistences and sequences. We should still believe in the succession of day and night, of summer and winter; but the soul of Force would be dislodged from our universe; causal relations would disappear, and with them that science which is now binding the parts of nature to an organic whole."

In these columns, there is insufficient space to discuss how far imagination has entered into the latest manifestations of science, as propounded in theories of Evolution, the Origin of Species, the Descent of Man, and other doctrines which have obtained wide acceptance. All that is attempted, now, is to direct attention to an example in which Imagination and Science have most conspicuously marched hand in hand.

There are two very prolific French writers who have acquired a prominent and honourable position in literature, by employing science jointly with imagination to accomplish their respective objects, each in a very different manner, and with very different ends in view.

One of them, Jules Verne, is well known here by numerous translations of his strange romances, as well as by spectacular representations, on the Paris stage, of the extraordinary adventures which they recount. Example, "Round the World in Eighty Days." His works may be said to illustrate "The Imaginative Uses of Science." He makes no pretence to inculcate serious

knowledge, but merely to amuse and surprise his readers by the doings of a set of personages and a series of wonderful events impossible under the present condition of things. He must be a bold man to have ventured on so startling a line of fiction; but in his case, as in others, fortune has favoured the brave.

The other, Camille Flammarion, confines himself to facts either actually ascertained or more or less possible or probable, leaving individuals and their fortunes out of the question. He employs no marvellous "dramatis personæ," like Jules Verne's serving man-of-all-work, who could see Jupiter's satellites with the naked eye, and jump from the top of a mountain into the car of a balloon which was passing close by. His voluminous works are not scientific novels, but very striking and attractive instances of the Scientific Use of the Imagination, endeavouring, from the certain knowledge of what really is, to induce a belief in what reasonably may be. He strives to extend our mental vision, and excites us to reflect on what may exist, what mighty events may be occurring far beyond the limits of our earthly ken.

His last production, "*Rêves Etoilés*,"* is a brief but fair specimen of the frame of mind which pervades his previous astronomical speculations. The book, quite small, is not dearer—but much more wholesome—than the cheap reprints of realistic novels now issued. And it will be strange if those who read his "*Starlight Dreams*" are not thereby led to see what he has to say in the eloquent pages of his former volumes.

A dream which has haunted more than one imagination, whether astronomically scientific or not, is the possibility of communication with other worlds outside our own. M. Flammarion begins with the nearest heavenly body, namely, our bright-faced satellite.

Some fifty years ago, the astronomer Littrow, director of the Vienna Observatory, started the idea of effecting an optical communication with the inhabitants of the moon.

A triangle traced on the lunar surface by three luminous lines, each ten or twelve miles long, would be visible here by the aid of our telescopes. We even observe much smaller details; for instance, the singular topographical tracings remarked in the lunar circus to which the name of

Plato has been given. Consequently, a triangle, a square, or a circle of like dimensions constructed by us on some vast plain by means of luminous points, either reflecting the solar light during daytime, or by electric light at night, would be visible by astronomers in the moon, supposing those astronomers to exist and to possess optical instruments equivalent to our own.

The inference is as plain as may be. If we were to observe on the moon a triangle correctly drawn, we should be not a little puzzled. We should either refer it to some optical illusion, or we should ask ourselves whether the chances of geological disturbance could have resulted in the formation of a regular geometrical figure. No doubt we should in the end feel obliged to admit this very exceptional possibility. But if, all at once, we saw the triangle change into a square, and, a few months afterwards, be replaced by a circle, we should then, quite reasonably, allow that an intelligent effect proves an intelligent cause, and we should be led to conclude that those geometrical figures revealed the presence of geometricians on the neighbouring world.

From that, to demanding the reason for the formation of those figures on the lunar soil, and inquiring why and with what object our unknown brethren traced them, is only a step very quickly made. Could it be with the hope and intention of entering into communication with us? The hypothesis is not so very absurd.

Why, after all, should not the inhabitants of the moon be more inquisitive, more intelligent than we are? Why should they not suppose that the earth may be inhabited as well as their own little world? And why should not their geometrical signals be made with the object of inquiring whether we really do exist? Moreover, an answer is not difficult. They exhibit a triangle; we can reproduce it here. If they trace a circle, we can do the same. And thus we shall have established a correspondence between earth and sky for the first time since the beginning of the world.

Since geometry is absolutely the same for the inhabitants of every planet, since two and two make four throughout the regions of infinite space, the signals thus exchanged between the earth and the moon would not be more obscure than the hieroglyphics which Champollion succeeded in deciphering. Communication, once ac-

* "*Rêves Etoilés*," Paris, C. Marpon et E. Flammarion, Éditeurs. Prix: 60 centimes.

complished, would soon become regular and productive. The moon, indeed, is close at hand—distant only thirty times the earth's diameter. Many a veteran rural postman has walked as many miles during the course of his official rounds. A telegraphic dispatch would reach it in a second and a quarter.

It must be confessed that, up to the present time, nothing has been remarked on the moon which can betray the existence there of an intelligent race of human beings. Nevertheless, astronomers who specially observe our satellite and perseveringly study its singular aspects, are generally of opinion that this heavenly body is not so utterly dead as it seems. We ought not to forget that, in the actual state of optics, it is difficult to apply to the observation of the moon a magnifying power superior to two thousand. A view of the moon, two thousand times nearer than it is in the heavens, only brings it to a distance from us of one hundred and ten, or one hundred and twenty miles. But what can we distinguish at a distance of one hundred and ten miles? A vast army on the march? A great city? Perhaps, still it is doubtful.

What is certain, is that enigmatical variations are even now taking place on its surface—notably in the area of the circus Plato, already mentioned. What is also certain is, that the lunar globe, forty-nine times smaller than the earth, and eighty-one times lighter, causes weight on its surface to be six times weaker than that which exists on the surface of our planet; so that an atmosphere analogous to that which we breathe, would be six times more rarefied, and difficult to be perceived by us. It is not, therefore, surprising that this neighbouring world should be so widely different to our own. Moreover, beheld from a balloon, at an altitude of only twelve or fifteen thousand feet, the earth appears desert, uninhabited, silent as an enormous cemetery. The traveller who should reach us from the moon in a balloon, might doubt, at that trifling distance, whether there were people in France, or hubbub in Paris.

The death-like aspect of our pale satellite did not offer much encouragement for the realisation of Littrow's original project. Consequently, other speculators allowed their imaginations to fly off to the planet Mars, which, although never nearer to us than fourteen million leagues, is the best known of all the worlds in the sky, and

which bears such a resemblance to the world we live in that, if we were suddenly transported thither, we should hardly feel ourselves out of our element.

The aspect of Mars, in fact, consoles us a little for that of the moon. We might fancy ourselves, really, in some terrestrial region. Continents, seas, islands, shores, peninsulas, capes, gulfs, clouds, rains, inundations, snows, winters and summers, springs and autumns, days and nights—all are there exactly as with us. The years are longer, consisting of six hundred and eighty-seven days, but the intensity of the seasons is absolutely the same as ours, for the inclination of its axis is the same. The days are also a trifle longer, since the diurnal rotation of Mars takes twenty-four hours, thirty-seven minutes, and twenty-three seconds; but the difference is not great. And please note, all this is known with precision. The diurnal rotation, for instance, is determined within the tenth of a second.

When we behold the polar snows on Mars melting in spring, the sharply-cut continents, the mediterranean seas with their deeply indented bays—the whole varied and suggestive geographical configuration—we cannot help asking whether the sun, which illumines Mars as well as the earth, can possibly shine upon no living creature there; whether those rains fecundate nothing; whether there be no live thing—no bird or beast—to breathe the atmosphere; and whether Mars, which rushes so rapidly through space that we can follow its progress from week to week, and even from day to day, is like an express train travelling along a railroad without passengers or merchandise.

The idea that the earth on which we live could revolve, as it does, round the sun, without being inhabited by any animated organism whatsoever, seems so inconsistent that it is difficult to admit its possibility. We cannot conceive that the energies of Nature, which would be as potent there as they are here, should remain eternally inactive and sterile.

But the distance of this planet is so great that, although far superior to the moon in volume, it appears, at its nearest approach to us, sixty-three times smaller. So that a telescope which magnifies only sixty-three times, shows us Mars of the same dimensions as the moon seen by the naked eye. A magnifying power of six hundred and thirty would give us a diameter ten times larger than our satel-

lite's as we behold it with our unaided vision, only, if any attempt were ever made to effect a communication between Mars and ourselves, the signals must evidently be on a much vaster scale than in the case of correspondence with the moon.

But may not the inhabitants of Mars have already taken the initiative? And is it not we who have failed to understand them?

Astronomical instruments were not invented here until the year 1609, and the principal geographical details of Mars have only been observed since 1858. Complete observations of its geography only date from 1862. The first detailed triangulation of the planet, comprising the smallest objects visible by the telescope and measured by the micrometer, was begun in 1877, continued in 1879, and terminated in 1882. It is therefore only within the last few years that the planet Mars has been within the reach of complete terrestrial observation.

According to the most probable cosmogonic theory, Mars is anterior to our planet by several millions of years, and much more advanced in its destiny. The inhabitants of Mars may have been making signals to us for more than a hundred thousand years, without anybody on earth suspecting it. The means of perceiving signals were wanting, even if we had the gift of interpreting their meaning.

The state of the case at present is this. The geographical map of Mars has lately been made, with infinite care, by Schiaparelli, the able director of the Milan Observatory. Now, on this map, which is given in Flammarion's richly illustrated volume, "*Les Terres du Ciel*," we may remark the presence of bright spots, shining like snow illumined by the sun. That their brightness is due to snow, is scarcely probable, because they occur close to the equator and in the tropics, as well as in higher latitudes. They can hardly be the summits of mountains, for they are close to seas, and are so symmetrically disposed in relation to certain rectilinear canals, that they compel us involuntarily to take them for geodesic landmarks. We notice triangles, squares, and oblongs.

M. Flammarion is far from asserting that these luminous points have been so placed by engineers or astronomers, or that the sixty straight, parallel, and double canals, in the same planet, which enable the seas to communicate

with each other, are the work of the inhabitants. Nature is so rich in processes that it would be presumptuous to limit her modes of action. Nevertheless, if the people of Mars intended to attract our attention by signals, this method would be one of the simplest, and even is the only one which has hitherto been imagined here. Finally, if such were the case, it would be we who have failed to understand it.

In which there is nothing that ought to surprise us. The inhabitants of earth do not trouble themselves about the heavens. The great majority—perhaps ninety-nine out of every hundred—do not know on what they are walking, and have not the slightest suspicion of the reality. Their thoughts are confined to eating, drinking, amassing objects of divers kinds, patriotically killing each other and being killed; but, as to inquiring where they are and what the universe is, that is no business of theirs. Their native ignorance suffices them.

The inhabitants of Mars, on the contrary, possessing a much older civilisation than ours, may be much more advanced in the way of progress and be in the full enjoyment of intellectual and spiritual life. Perhaps, however, the Martial Academies have declared the earth to be uninhabited and uninhabitable, because it is not identically the same as their own country; because it has only one moon, whereas they have two; because our years are too short; because our sky is often cloudy, whilst theirs is almost always bright; and for a thousand sundry reasons, one as completely conclusive as the other.

After steam, the telegraph, the electric light, and the telephone, would not the discovery of undoubted proofs that humanity exists in another region of our solar archipelago be the most marvellous crowning of the nineteenth century's scientific glory?

And this is only one of M. Flammarion's dreams—which may not all, perhaps, be dreams.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART II.

CHAPTER VIII. BOIS-LE-COMTE.

WHEN Captain Percival first came to the Château de la Tour Blanche he had no intention of staying there more than a

few days. Even ideas of rushing away the next morning had crossed his mind several times, when Celia's matter-of-factness or her husband's good-humour bored him beyond endurance, or when some fancied little slight upset the balance of his temper more than usual. But still he lingered on from day to day, treated by every one with much more kindness than he deserved, and quite incapable of knowing that his departure might be something of a relief to two at least of the family.

He lounged about the old place in the glorious heat of June, and watched them all, not caring much to share in any of their doings, but making his remarks freely after his own fashion. They indulged him and endured his ways just as other people had done before, for he was original, and could be very pleasant when he liked. There was no stiffness to be seen anywhere, except in the face and manner of old Pierre, who disliked the English stranger so much that he would hardly wait upon him. As to Celia, her tiresome cousin had apparently lost the power of worrying her which he had certainly possessed when he first came to the château. To a creature of his temperament, there was something vexatious in the interest she took in everything that went on round her: in her husband's plans and pursuits, in Antoinette's lessons, in the poor people, the Curé and his charities, the dogs, the horses, the farm, the vineyard. If she was not busy with some of these things, she was working hard at her embroidery. She did not feel the heat, though to Vincent, an old Indian, it was almost overpowering; she walked about all day with a large white parasol, and was always calling Antoinette to go with her. Feelings of unreasoning anger devoured Vincent: he was suspicious of Celia, refusing in his heart to believe that she cared a straw for all these things; but, at the same time, he was jealous of them all, of everything and everybody that seemed to occupy and interest her; they were all his enemies, his rivals; he felt himself neglected and thrown aside for them every hour of the day. Sometimes he almost hated Celia; and there had always been more earnest than play in his amiable wish that he might have the chance of burning her house down.

So the days went on, and in the atmosphere of La Tour Blanche, with its usual light-hearted sweetness, Vincent moved about rather like a spirit of darkness.

Everybody else was happy, it seemed; but his peculiarities did not trouble them much. After all, he reflected, he did not belong to them; his humours did not matter to them; the politeness with which they treated him cost them nothing. He was unhappy, though not nearly so much so as he thought himself. He could not make up his mind to go away, though he knew he had better not stay; but he was tolerably sure—not being omniscient, with all his cleverness—that he hurt nobody but himself by staying.

When he had been about three weeks at La Tour Blanche, a stupid little thing happened. As Celia had told him, there were very few people in the country at this time, but these few were very sociable, and saw a good deal of each other. One day he went with his friends to dine with some distant cousins of Achille's, who lived about ten miles off. He had half wanted to stay at home; but Celia, knowing him better than he knew himself, insisted on his going. They were nice people, she said; they had always been kind to her, and their château was very old and curious. She did not tell Vincent that if he stayed at home, though by his own choice, he would feel himself injured and neglected, and would be in a bad temper all the next day.

"Come; I want you," she said kindly. "You don't so very often do anything to please me."

"Don't I? And whose fault is that, I wonder," said Vincent.

But he submitted, and went.

It was all as Celia had described it, and rather amusing. The people were kind and old-fashioned, very demonstrative, tremendous Royalists, living quite out of the world, and talking so fast that a foreigner could hardly understand them. Their château dated from the time of François Premier, part of it earlier still; it had several great strong towers, a "colombier" large enough for all the pigeons in the country, and vast rooms leading one into the other—terrible in winter, desolate enough even on a summer evening, though deliciously cool. No modern restorer had found his way into the Château of Bois-le-Comte; no modern wealth and taste had furnished these rooms in one correct style or another. The windows were shaded with mean chintz curtains; and spindle-legged furniture, which might have dated from the First Empire, stood stiffly on the bare

floors. From the great high pale walls looked down a collection of the strangest family portraits that Vincent had ever seen. The old plate and china, however, were magnificent; the dinner was perfectly cooked, and enormously long; and both hosts and guests were full of kindness and good-humour. It was not a large party—only Monsieur and Madame de Cernay, and some other people from an opposite direction. These, and the people of the house, were devoted to Achille and Celia. Antoinette had her confidences with one or two other young girls. Vincent would have found himself rather left out in the conversation if Madame de Cernay had not exerted herself to be agreeable to him. She was not fond of the English, it was true; but this was a good-looking man—a soldier, with something interesting about him. It would do him no harm, she probably thought, to realise that there were other handsome women in the world besides his cousin; those discontented eyes of his might be better employed than in following the pretty marquise for ever. If there was any further malice in Madame de Cernay's motive, it must be remembered that she and her husband had been Achille de Montmirail's most intimate friends, before his second marriage disappointed them, and changed everything.

Vincent had no particular objection to flirting with Madame de Cernay. Though in theory he disliked Frenchwomen, he was as ready to be flattered and spoilt by a Frenchwoman as by anybody else. Madame de Cernay had fine eyes and a pretty complexion, knew how to amuse herself and other people, did not care much what she said, and was bent on being agreeable to him. Perhaps, after all, if Celia looked that way, she might as well see how thoroughly well he was entertained for once. So thought Percival to himself.

After dinner, as he and Madame de Cernay were going back with the others into the drawing-room, passing through one or two great bare vaults of dimly-lighted rooms, he suddenly stooped to pick up a rose which somebody before them had just let fall.

At the same moment Antoinette sprang forward from behind.

"Ah! you saw it—mamma's rose. Shall I give it back to her?"

"No, thanks," said Vincent, quietly keeping possession. "I picked it up; it is my prize, not yours, mademoiselle."

"But she will miss it; she will want it," said the girl smiling.

"Then I will give it back to her."

"And a very pretty one, too," said Madame de Cernay, admiring the rose, which he carried in his hand. "I like that wild sort of rose, myself: cream, flushed with red, like a sunrise, if I am not too poetical. But it is not so like Madame de Montmirail; it is not the right rose for her."

"And why not, pray, madame?" asked Vincent.

"How do I know?" said the Baronne, and she looked critically at the rose, her lips trembling with mischief. "It is one of those things one feels and cannot explain. You certainly ought not to want an explanation—you feel it just as I do. There is too much abandon, too much carelessness, about this rose; what shall I say? it has a passion, a sentiment, which hardly suits our pretty marquise. If I gave her a rose it would be a blush rose, something between white and pink, with softly-rounded leaves which always keep their place, and carry their lovely bloom—a certain strength in all their softness. As to this wild thing here, it is a Bohemian, a gipsy of a rose. Give it to me, monsieur. I am an old woman, but it suits me better than it suits madame your cousin."

"You make the rose so interesting, madame, that I think I must keep it myself," said Vincent; and just then the master of the house came up to talk to Madame de Cernay, and he moved away, carrying his rose to the other side of the room.

Later in the evening they went out, and sat in the warm soft moonlight, on a kind of high terrace or rampart overlooking a deep moat, now dry and ivy-grown. The great white walls of the château, with loophole slits of windows, closed them in on two sides; then there was the draw-bridge, now fixed, leading out to a wide court-yard.

Everybody sat in a circle, talking; little dogs played about; Antoinette, still childish, wandered off with her young friends; and Vincent presently slipped away too, and strolled along by the wall of the moat and leaned over it, gazing into the dim depths beneath, rather sulky and alone.

Every one had been very civil to him, but Celia had left him too much to her friends; she had not looked at him or spoken to him through that whole evening, though she must have seen him standing

about waiting for the slightest encouragement to give her back her rose.

Suddenly, as he stood there, he muttered something indignantly, and threw the rose over the low wall. At the same moment, before it had reached the grassy ditch below, a voice close to him exclaimed:

"Mon Dieu! Poor rose! I would not have treated you like that. But no doubt you are punished for the crimes of somebody else."

Vincent started, and laughed nervously. Madame de Cernay was standing by his side, looking very handsome and smiling in the moonlight, and waving her fan.

"I beg your pardon, madame. I did not hear you. I thought I was alone," he said, and for once he was confused.

"People cannot expect to be alone at a dinner-party," said Madame de Cernay. "And people with well-regulated minds don't wish it. Have I offended you? I am sorry; but you interest me. The fact is, as my husband tells me, I am too soft-hearted. I can't enjoy myself when other people are looking miserable."

"And you think that I am looking miserable?" said Vincent.

"Well—not too happy."

"You are kinder than most people," he said, standing upright before her, and looking on the ground. "Most people enjoy the miseries of their fellow-creatures."

"And who, for instance, is so barbarous?"

"Most people, if they are perfectly contented themselves, expect all the world to be so too."

"Even the hearts that they have trodden under foot, on their way to victory," murmured Madame de Cernay. "Well, yes, dear monsieur, there is plenty of that kind of hardness in the world; but I did not know it was common among your excellent English."

"A great deal of it is put on; it is not real. But when people have chosen wrong, they choose to stick to their choice, and pretend they like it. I suspect that that sort of thing is more English than French," said Vincent. He seemed, somehow, to be thinking aloud. Madame de Cernay opened her eyes wide, and listened with all her ears.

"Fate is hard on all of us, sometimes. But there is compensation—generally, at least."

"Some people don't want any."

"Then they must be excellent—or, perhaps, happier than you think."

"Oh, perfectly happy. Nobody could doubt that," said Vincent; and as Madame de Cernay paused for a moment, looking at him curiously, the talk at the far end of the terrace broke into sudden peals of laughter; Celia's laugh, always particularly sweet, rang clear among the rest. At the same time there was a pushing back of chairs on the gravel, and a distant growl of thunder seemed to explain the sultry heaviness of heat which had brooded over the evening.

"The air is very electric," said Madame de Cernay, amiably. "There will be a storm, and after that you will feel better. And, if you like, monsieur, I can show you a little staircase which leads down into the moat. You will easily find your rose. I see it from here."

"Thank you, madame, but it may as well stay where it is," said Vincent, rather crossly.

"Well, yes, as your cousin does not seem to miss it, I agree with you. But now you perceive that you might as well have given it to me."

"Ah, no, madame," he said with a laugh, "you are quite clever enough to see that that was impossible."

"But this is very serious!" said Madame de Cernay, with a half-joking air of sympathy. "You have no idea of the confidences you have made to me this evening."

"Have I?" he said. "I don't think so. It is your wonderful perception."

"I am not generally supposed to be stupid. I tell you, you interest me, and I have a fancy for knowing people's histories. So now I know a little bit of yours, and I don't blame you."

"There is no one to be blamed," he began, turning upon her almost angrily; but the group was breaking up, and now Celia came to meet them along the terrace.

"Have you seen Antoinette?" she said. "We are going. Where is my rose, Vincent? I thought I saw it in your hand."

"Ah, there!" laughed Madame de Cernay. "After carrying it about for an hour, and refusing to give it to me, and finally dropping it into the moat—"

"Oh, it does not matter in the least," said Celia amiably. "It would have been quite faded by this time."

Vincent Percival was not all bad, or all foolish. He remembered too late that there was no love lost between this Frenchwoman and Celia; their manner to each other, with all its politeness, was enough to tell anyone that. The idiocy of his behaviour

appeared to him, as they drove home, in something of its proper light. The thunderstorm had come on quickly, and the last five miles of their way was through pouring sheets of rain, constant cracking peals of thunder, and lightning, terrible and beautiful, which came flashing every minute, illuminating the broad sweeps of country, the woods, the distant hills, all lost again instantly in a blackness deeper than ordinary night.

"I am afraid our fine weather is breaking up," said M. de Montmirail.

"Ah, what a pity! It will spoil all the roses," cried his daughter.

"I must be breaking up too," said Vincent from his corner. "I should be glad to be back in Paris to-morrow night, if you will be good enough to send me to the station."

A flash of lightning at the moment showed Celia's face. She was looking up with quite a new expression—startled dismay; a sudden pain which rushed to the surface, before she had time to hide it.

"To-morrow!" she said.

"My dear cousin," said Achille, with grave kindness, "I am afraid we have not made your visit pleasant to you. Or is it that you dislike our storms? There is something of the fiery south in them, it is true; but they don't come every day."

"Thanks. I have had a very jolly visit, and I like your storms—they are the real thing," said Vincent. "But I have been idling here for three weeks now, very much in your way, all of you——"

"Du tout—not at all, my cousin, I assure you," exclaimed Achille.

Another flash of lightning, and Celia's face again in the dark corner; this time it was quiet and thoughtful, and she was looking down. As Vincent looked, she shrugged her shoulders a little, and pulled her wraps more closely round her.

"You are very good," he said to the Marquis. "But these things must come to an end."

"But you will come again."

Vincent did not find that his hostess made any objection to his going away. She took it as a matter of course, like most other things, and did not trouble herself to express any regrets. He was half glad that it was so easily settled, half savage at her apparent indifference.

"She would make more fuss if some fool of a Frenchman were going away, after being here two nights—M. de Cernay, or that old fellow at Bois-le-Comte." Vincent

told himself, as he came down to breakfast that last morning, and heard her laughing with Antoinette before he reached the dining-room. "I wish I had never come," he went on thinking. "Why did I come? Because I wanted to see what her life was like, and whether she was changed, and so on. Well, her life is a poor sort of thing, and she is not changed. Just the same cold-blooded creature; and yet—well, there is no understanding her."

He, perhaps, understood her still less when after breakfast it appeared that she was going to drive with him herself to the station at Saint Bernard. It would be convenient to her, she said; she had business in the town; she made no pretence of wishing to see him off, merely saying in her calm way, "I can drop you at the station." But why should she have done it at all?

"I would have gone with pleasure," said the Marquis, "but I have an engagement at the Mairie."

"I know you have, mon ami," said his wife. "And I won't take Antoinette, because I know she does not want to come."

"But anything you like," the girl began; but her stepmother put her aside very gently, but decidedly.

"It is all arranged," she said. "The carriage will be here in a quarter of an hour, Vincent—if you will be ready:" and she went out of the room.

So Captain Percival ended his first visit to La Tour Blanche. It was a glorious day after the rain; all the world fresh and glittering with raindrops, under a sky which looked as if it knew no storms. The Marquis and Antoinette stood on the terrace, and wished him a good journey. Achille was kind and smiling, as usual, and shouted some little commission to his wife at the last moment. Antoinette looked a little grave. When the carriage had whirled off down the avenue, she turned to her father, and with a little movement of involuntary relief put her hand in his arm.

"I wonder if mamma's cousin has many friends," she said—"whether many people like him in England."

"How can I tell? His relations seem to like him," said her father. "You seem to be prejudiced, and so is M. de Cernay; but neither of you likes the English."

"Oh, I like the English. I always agree with you. Only this one is very discontented. He has the air of a wild beast looking out of a hole."

"What a pretty comparison! And you in your pinafore are like an over-grown chicken. Run away and feed your animals. I must go to the village."

Antoinette went off laughing; but after a minute or two she became grave and thoughtful, and the old woman who looked after the geese found her a little severe that morning.

Celia had plenty to say as she and Vincent drove through the wooded lanes to Saint Bernard. Her talk was all about nothing—nothing, at least, that interested him; the houses in the neighbourhood, the people last night, various plans of her own.

"I wish I were going to Paris, too," she said. "You will find it lovely; only getting a little too hot."

"No; it won't be too hot. Come with me," said Vincent, rather grimly.

"Ah, what fun if I could!" she said lightly. "But now tell me—when are you coming again?"

"Never."

"Oh, what a very bad compliment to us all. Nonsense! I shall expect you in August. And Vincent, I wish you would bring Aunt Flo with you. Now, tell her, when you go home, that you have promised to bring her to me in August. Don't forget."

"Charity begins at home," said Vincent.

"You are too deep for me. I don't understand you."

"I must think of myself first. It might be good for my mother, but it would be bad for me. I couldn't stand another three weeks of it, Celia."

"Have you been so horribly bored, then?" she said in her cool, unconscious way. "Well, I am very sorry; but you will find it quite different in the autumn. Perhaps September will be better than August. We are really very gay then. You will come then; I shall consider it an engagement."

"Why do you want me to come?" And then he laughed.

"Because we are old friends, and I like you. So does Achille."

"Thank you. It does great credit to Achille's amiable disposition."

"I think so too, to tell you the truth," said Celia. "But nobody can deny that you are original, and so an interesting study."

"What a happy life, to be an interesting study! One might as well be a fossil dug out of that bank yonder."

"You are the most difficult person to

please that I ever met. Most people like to know that they are interesting."

Vincent made no answer, and for a few minutes Celia looked away at the poplars by the road side. They were close on Saint Bernard now.

"Well," he said at last, as they began to rattle at a tremendous pace through the stony, narrow street, "it is not your fault if your kindness is thrown away. As you ask me to come again, I probably shall; you know what you are doing. For several reasons it might be better not; but if you really wish me to come——"

"You are talking in wonderful riddles," she said.

"Of which you know the answers," Vincent interrupted her.

She bowed her head. There was a faint look of annoyance on her beautiful face, and her colour deepened slightly as she said:

"I dare say we understand each other well enough—quite as well as we need. I hope you will give my message to Aunt Flo."

They stopped at the station, and just then Monsieur and Madame de Cernay drove past, with much smiling, and waving, and salutation. The sight of Madame de Cernay reminded Vincent what a fool he had made of himself the night before, and improved his manners and his temper suddenly.

He shook hands with his cousin, and said good-bye in a slightly off-hand way.

"Till September, then," she said; and she gave him a charming smile as he stood on the station steps; then the carriage dashed away round a corner, and she was gone.

He stood, for a moment, looking blankly after her.

"Why am I going away? I need not have gone. What a hopeless ass I am! She is simply magnificent."

These, and more reflections like them, occupied Captain Percival's mind through most of his journey.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

AT THE MOMENT OF VICTORY.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "A Deteless Bargain," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

"How can you let him make himself so ridiculous?" asked Madge of Lance, after dinner that night, as together they stood at one of the long drawing-room windows, watching the crimson after-glow fade from the cloud-mountains in the sky, and the night-blue slowly spreading athwart the valley.

"Him! Who, what?" asked Lance, starting as if suddenly aroused from a reverie.

"Why, Sir Peter, of course. Why did you let him bring an utter stranger into the house in this way? A word from you would often prevent these foolish things, yet you never speak that word," she said.

She spoke in low tones. That drawing-room owned to four windows and three doors, and there was no knowing but what Sir Peter might enter by one of them at any moment.

Lance shook himself free from his thoughts.

"Now I like that, Madge," he began, laughingly. "You know Uncle Peter as well as I do—when once he has taken a notion into his head, not the Lords, and the Commons, and the whole bench of Bishops combined, would prevent him carrying it out."

It seemed as if the mantle of Lady Judith had temporarily fallen upon Madge's shoulders—she was not to be mollified. Lance's laugh, too, did not mend matters.

"It would be bad enough," she went on, "if you stood by and said nothing; but

when you absolutely carry him off to the scene of a railway accident for the whole and sole purpose of——"

"Giving him something to do," finished Lance. "My dear Madge, I wonder how many times in your life you have said to me, 'Give him something to do or he'll drive us all mad.'"

"Yes, but not such a something as this. If you must bring people into the house, bring men whom you can entertain, not women who will be left on our hands."

Lance eyed her curiously. Madge seemed more disturbed than so trifling an incident warranted.

Again he tried to laugh the matter off. "You don't mean to say that you're hard-hearted enough to wish that we had left this poor girl to sleep at the railway station? You know there's not an inn even at Lower Upton at which a lady could put up."

"Why didn't she go on with the other passengers to Carstairs? There were more people than she, I expect, who came down by her train."

"She hadn't made up her mind what to do when Uncle Peter and I drove up on the look-out for——"

"Forlorn, beautiful young women," finished Madge sarcastically.

"Exactly. And finding what we went out to seek, what could we do but——"

"She is not beautiful," interrupted Madge vehemently. "Her face has a history written on it, and it is not a good one."

But even as she said the words the thought in her heart was: "I would give all the Cohen diamonds and every penny I have in the world to have such a face."

Lance put on a serio-comic expression.

"Ah! every one knows, Madge, that you never mean one half you say," he said,

as thoroughly bent on teasing as if he were a schoolboy and Madge a screaming refractory parrot.

"I mean every word I say; and, I repeat, her face is an evil one and repulses me. Somehow it makes me think of midnight bridges and dark rivers, and——"

But at this moment a door opened, and Sir Peter entered. He stood for a moment looking about him.

There was Lady Judith, asleep in a low chair, her head thrown back, her big fan drooping from her hand, her face crimson as usual. Evidently she had fanned herself into the arms of Morpheus. There were Madge and Lance whispering together in the window recess, for all the world like a pair of lovers.

"Delightful!" thought the kind-hearted old gentleman. "Just as it should be! Capital match! Most suitable in every way!"

And as he could not bring himself to interrupt the love-making of the young people, he crossed the room on tip-toes and went out by the opposite door.

Madge seemed instinctively conscious of Sir Peter's thoughts.

"Why did he run away like that!" she queried, plucking nervously at the posy of yellow roses which she wore in her waist-band.

"He will be back again in another minute," said Lance composedly.

And sure enough back again he came.

This time through the window, the third from the one at which Lance and Madge were standing.

"Don't disturb yourselves," he said, standing in front of the two and falling into a backward and forward heel and toe motion he frequently adopted, and which suggested the idea that he had suddenly been put upon rockers. "Don't disturb yourselves. I only came in for a moment to say that——"

He paused abruptly. Honestly he had nothing to say. If he had spoken out his thoughts he would have said: "The house is horribly still; it's time I set some one or something stirring."

"That it was a fine evening," suggested Lance.

"Ah, yes, a fine evening! That was it. And—and it was a disappointment our guest couldn't sit down to dinner with us." This was a sudden thought and he jumped at it.

Madge here plucked so viciously at her roses that two or three fell to the ground.

Lance picked them up and presented them to her in the most lover-like attitude he could command.

Sir Peter smiled benignly on him. "Ah, 'gather your rosebuds while ye may.' You know what the old song says, eh?" Here he gave Lance a sly little dig in the ribs, and forthwith vanished by another window.

Madge turned sharply upon Lance. "Why do you do it?" she queried hotly. "Why do you make believe and make him think that—that——"

"That—that——" mimicked Lance. "My dear Madge, all my telling in the world wouldn't convince Uncle Peter that we were not desperately in love with each other. You try your hand at telling him and see what will come of it."

"You tell him things as if you didn't mean them—you ought to—to make him understand that—that——" again she broke off, and again Lance mimicked her.

"That—that you haven't the faintest liking in the world for me, that, perhaps, you may marry a chimney-sweep to-morrow; but Lance Clive—never. Well, I'll do my best to make him understand."

"I never said such a thing; you've no right to put words into my mouth," she cried vehemently; and then, as if fearful of losing her self-control, she half-hid her face in her yellow roses, and left the room.

"If things could only have been different five years ago!" she said to herself as she closed the door behind her. "If I had but been free, as other girls, to choose or to refuse!"

CHAPTER V.

LANCE remained standing at the open window. A half-amused expression flitted across his face.

"How ridiculous of Madge," he thought, "to lose her temper over a girl she has only seen once in her life, and whom most probably after to-morrow she'll never see again!"

Presently the half-amused expression on his face gave way to a more thoughtful look.

"In spite of her 'No,' six months ago," he thought, "I believe she has a faint liking for me. I wonder if I asked her a second time what answer I should get!"

The wonder was one to entertain, not to dismiss as a passing thought. So, with a glance at the still peacefully-sleeping Lady Judith, Lance took his cigar-case out of

his pocket and strolled through the French window on to the outside terrace. The evening air was cool and balmy. The garden showed weird and mysterious under the long night-shadows which were beginning to troop forth from beneath the trees and castle walls.

Lance went strolling in leisurely fashion along the dim paths, his thoughts as serene and limpid as the dark stretch of summer sky overhead. It did not require the miserable rushlight of a young man's vanity, nor that stronger light which experience of women's ways gives, to read clearly Madge's apparently capricious conduct, when once a steady attention was accorded to it. She would be wooed for herself, not for her wealth; wooed, too, in downright passionate earnest, not by a lukewarm suitor edged on by a lively guardian. This was what her alternate sweetness and sourness, her petulance and playfulness meant if they meant anything at all.

And, after all, so Lance's thoughts went, there was no reason why Madge should not be thus wooed. Hers was a sweet and attractive personality when once one had learnt to pierce that outer armour of caprice wherewith temperaments like hers, rendered supersensitive by circumstances, so frequently clothe themselves.

When Sir Peter had brought her, a shy little maiden of twelve, to Upton Castle, Lance had made a fine pet and plaything of her. Later on, as she developed into the girl in her teens, he had been honestly in love with her. Later on still, when Sir Peter had taken her future in hand and considered he had done a thoroughly good day's work in marrying her to old David Cohen, Lance had seen fit to indulge in the bitterness of a rejected suitor, and to anathematise her for a heartless flirt, although at the same time he had gone out of his way to convince "Uncle Punch and Aunt Judy," and all the world beside, that he and Madge had never been more than brother and sister to each other. During Madge's short married life he had seen next to nothing of her; but when on the death of her husband she shut up her town house, let her country house, and came back to the home of her girlhood, he was willing enough to listen to Sir Peter's suggestion that "he and Madge were made for each other," and to do his best to obliterate from his recollection that short period of her wedded life.

Thinking over his offer of marriage now in this dreamy half-light, he said to himself that he did not wonder at the impetuous "No" it had received, considering what a small amount of energy he had displayed in the making of it. Doubtless it would have met with a different reception if Sir Peter had left him alone to make it in his own fashion, instead of jogging his elbow, as it were, morning, noon, and night, to do at a rush a thing which could have been far better accomplished by successive steps.

Lance finished his cigar, but still lingered out there among the shadows and heavy flower-scents, indulging now in this pleasant thought, now in that. The Castle grounds wound downwards with many a steep pathway right into the valley, where, among the stalwart pines and drooping larches, stood the keeper's cottage and the home farm. It occurred to him that there was something he particularly wished to say to the gamekeeper about a bit of land which was to be enclosed for cover that year, so, in spite of the growing dark, he decided to make his way down to the cottage at once, lest to-morrow's occupations might once more sweep the matter from his mind.

The shadows closed around him as he descended the incline. Behind him lights were beginning to show in the Castle frontage through its trellis-screen of sycamore and cedar. Overhead the smirched grey of twilight had given place to the sapphire-blue of a night sky pierced with a hundred thousand "star windows to let out heaven's light." His downward path showed grey in front of him, dimly tessellated with the faint shadows of the planes and wild plum-trees which grew at intervals on either side. Then for a brief distance the path wound upward again, with a wood on one side, and a high hedge on the other. Beyond this hedge a bare, brown upland rose, treeless, and shadowless.

A gap in the hedge, where the last hunt had ridden through, framed for Lance a bird's-eye view of this sterile waste. It showed him something else beside the dry stunted turf and a few scurrying rabbits—the figure of a woman sharply outlined against the night-sky. She half-sat, half-crouched, with arms encircling her knees. She wore no hat, her hair was tightly coiled about her head, her face was upturned to the heavens.

Lance was neither poet nor painter, but nevertheless the weirdness and mystic

beauty of the scene made itself felt. That crouching attitude, the wildly desolate surroundings, seemed to transport him straight from the Cumberland hillside to classic ground, peopled with the queen-prophetesses of ancient myth. If the woman had suddenly tossed her arms on high, and burst into some wild invocation, it would have seemed all in keeping with the ghostly scene.

But she did nothing of the sort. Instead, as if conscious of his presence, she suddenly turned her face towards him. Then Lance in utter amazement recognised, by the light of the stars, the pallid face and jet-black hair of Miss Jane Shore.

He was through the hedge in a moment, and in another was standing beside her on the shadowless waste.

"Miss Shore!" he exclaimed. "What are you—can you be doing out here at this time of night?"

The girl did not start nor move from her crouching attitude. For one instant her large grey eyes were lifted to his face with a hunted, forlorn look in them which made his heart ache for her.

"Looking at the stars," she answered dreamily, absently. Then she let her gaze sweep the sky once more.

There was no moon; the bare upland on which they stood showed, in the half light made by the summer sky and myriad stars, a ghostly patch from out the surrounding gloom of dense hedges and denser woods. The girl's upturned face seemed more like some marble mask than a thing which had life and could redden and smile; the black sweep of hair across her forehead heightened its pallor into an almost death-like whiteness, while the grey garments which clung to her showed like so much dim shroud-like vapour from which she was just emerging.

An artist seeking an impersonation of a fallen star, looking upward to its lost place in the heavens, might have found his ideal realised here.

Lance, in his young robust flesh and blood, felt himself in some sort out of keeping with his surroundings.

For a moment he felt tongue-tied; then, as if to break a spell, he spoke:

"If you are fond of star-gazing," he said, "you ought to go to St. Cuthbert's churchyard—it stands on a promontory—you can get a splendid view of the heavens there, right away over the Irish sea."

Treeless though this upland was, the expanse of sky it commanded was com-

paratively circumscribed, on one side by the thick wood which stood on yet higher ground, on the other by the majestic crags and headlands of the Cuddaws.

Only the first part of his sentence seemed to catch her ear.

"Fond of star-gazing," she repeated slowly. "Is one fond of gazing on the faces of one's enemies? The stars are my enemies. I hate—hate them."

Lance tried to be comfortable and common-place. "Pardon me," he said, "then why do you come out here with nothing between you and the sky, when you could so easily, by drawing your curtains, shut out the faces of your enemies?"

She answered his question circuitously. "You ask your friend to tell you your fortune; he will say pleasant things to you—he will lie to please you. You ask your enemy; he will speak truth to you—the stars cannot lie."

The effort with which she spoke English was marked in this sentence.

"For all that, or rather in spite of all that, I don't think that I should feel disposed to neglect the society of my friends for that of my enemies," he answered lightly, but feeling all the time that his light words were strangely out of place.

She turned her large luminous eyes full on him. "What if you have no friends to neglect?" she asked coldly, stonily, as one might who had long been accustomed to look the fact in the face.

If Lance had been in his usual frame of mind, words would have come trippingly to his tongue at hearing a handsome young woman thus frankly proclaim her friendlessness. That he stood silently gazing at her for a good minute and a half, showed that he was undergoing a new experience. Her head drooped, her hands lay limply in her lap. Seated thus, she gave him the impression of some one half-stunned by some crushing blow, listless and indifferent whether a second would follow.

"I can hardly credit such a thing," he began hesitatingly.

She did not let him finish his sentence. She rose slowly from her crouching posture. In the dim light her tall figure seemed to elongate itself beyond its real height.

"Look! my star, my fate," she said in the same hard, bitter voice as before.

Lance followed the sweep of her hand to where, under the shadow of the Cuddaw fell, the old Castle dominated the land-

scape. High in the heavens, directly over the topmost peak of the Fell, a planet shone out with brilliant metallic lustre among a thousand stars.

Lance, very hazy in astronomical knowledge, would have liked to ask a thousand questions. What planet was it? Had it a bad character among the planets? And so forth.

But she would not allow one. She drew the hood of her cloak over her head, and so closely round her face that nought but her glittering, forlorn eyes showed beneath it.

"Come, let us go back to the house," she said, "I have seen enough for one night."

SOME BITS OF NORMAN LONDON.

POST-RESTORATION London, by which is meant the London of Queen Anne and the first two Georges, mellowed by the hand of time, may be considered quaint if not picturesque. Jacobean London, if we may judge by the specimens which have descended to us, must have been a mixture of the quaint and the picturesque. Tudor London must have been both magnificent and miserable, with no mean between. Mediæval and Norman London must have been thoroughly magnificent.

Squalor and slums, of course, were grouped around the splendid gateways of the castles and the religious houses; but if records and relics are to be accepted as faithful portraiture of the appearance of the city generally, the splendour and magnificence must have far outshone the squalor and poverty, for the simple reason that between the boundaries of one religious house and those of another, there could have been but little room for squalor and poverty, so numerous were they.

Strange as it may sound, London is, and always has been to all appearances, an essentially ecclesiastical city. There are probably at this time more churches assembled within the boundaries of London Wall than within any other space of equal dimensions in the world; and this plethora of ecclesiastical buildings must have been much more striking in an age when land was comparatively cheap, when there was no necessity to seize upon every available plot of ground for the purpose of running up warehouses, and counting-houses, and shops, and when such houses as did exist had open spaces about them. Before the

Great Fire there were one hundred and thirty-nine churches in London, of which thirteen belonged to religious houses—an enormous number if we consider the space of ground over which the London of 1666 spread; and, in the middle of the fourteenth century, when Roman Catholicism in England was in the full flush of its power and glory, there were no less than thirty distinct and powerful religious houses in London, not inclusive of "cells" and "colleges."

As our business is with Norman London in particular, we have only to do with the nine of these houses which were existing in the year 1108; but we may be allowed to support our characterisation of London as essentially an ecclesiastical city by a brief enumeration of these and the others.

Strange to say, of the richest and most powerful of the old London religious houses the traces are the most scanty. These were, the House of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, called Trinity or Christ Church, in Aldgate; Saint Martin le Grand; the Dominican House of the Friars Preachers, generally known as the Black Friars; the Sisterhood of Saint Clare in the Minories; the Abbey of Saint Peter's at Westminster; and Bermondsey Abbey. Scarcely less splendid or powerful were the Bernardine House of the Templars; the House of Saint John of Jerusalem at Clerkenwell, erected as a kind of rival to the foundation of Hugh de Payens by his visitor, the Patriarch Heraclius; the Augustinian Priory of the Holy Trinity at Saint Bartholomew's, Smithfield; the Black Benedictine Nunnery at Clerkenwell; Saint Mary's Priory, Southwark; and Saint Thomas of Acons (Acre). There was also a House of the Brothers of Saint Mary of Mount Carmel, generally known as the White Friars; a Franciscan House of Friars Minors at Christ's Hospital, called the Grey Friars; a House of the Brothers of the Holy Cross, of which the name still lingers in Crutched Friars; Saint Mary's Nunnery in Bishopsgate Without; the Hospitallers of Saint Mary of Bethlehem, who wore the star of Bethlehem on their robes, and whose memory is still kept up in the "Bedlam" Hospital, which occupies the site of the original religious house; the Carthusians were at Charterhouse and Saint Pancras; the Augustinians at Austin Friars; the Brotherhood of Saint Mary and Saint Giles at Cripplegate; the Benedictines at Saint Helen's. Bishopsgate, the House of

Saint Mary of the Mincheons, of which the name survives in Mincing Lane; a Nunnery of the Holy Cross and Saint Helen's; the Hospital of Saint Mary Spittle; a great House of Saint Katharine by the Tower, founded by Edward the Third's Queen, Philippa of Hainault; the House of Saint John the Baptist, Shoreditch; besides houses at Kilburn, Stratford, Lambeth, and Canonbury.

The appearance of these houses with their chapels, their cloisters, their gates, their outbuildings, all reared in that spirit of enthusiasm which made building well and magnificently a duty of conscience; each standing amidst its grounds and pleasaunces, can hardly be imagined as we trudge over and poke about their sites of to-day.

But we must get on to Norman London. Our first duty is to find out which of this mass of houses are clearly Norman, and we find but the nine following: The Templars; the House of Saint John at Clerkenwell; Saint Bartholomew's, Smithfield; Saint Mary's Nunnery, Clerkenwell; Bermondsey Abbey; Saint Mary's, Southwark; Trinity, Aldgate; Saint Thomas of Acons; and Saint Martin le Grand.

Our next duty is to mark of which of these are traces still visible, and the number is reduced to three—the Temple Church; Saint Bartholomew's, Smithfield; and Saint Mary's, Southwark; for, although we shall find Norman traces in other directions, notably at the Tower, and at Westminster, and in Cheapside, the religious houses claim our attention first. The most perfect remains in London of genuine Norman work are to be found in the Church of Saint Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield. That which we view to-day, although a very fair-sized parish church, is but the choir of the ancient building; the disappeared nave extended as far as the beautiful little Pointed arch under the pickle-shop by which we approach the church, as is evident by the remains of pillars on the right-hand side of the pathway; the transepts covering where is now Cloth Fair on the left to Bartholomew Close on the right. However, we know that what has been spared is older than what was pulled down by Sir Richard Rich at the Dissolution; the church showing traces as we move from east to west of that struggle between the Norman and its successor, the Pointed, or Early English style of architecture, which we shall remark elsewhere, and which reminds us of the evidence in the Ducal Palace of Venice, of

a similar struggle between the Lombard and the Arab.

The church was founded in 1128, by Rahere, the astute Augustinian, whose sombre effigy reclines under a delicate canopy of fifteenth century work in the chancel, and contains far more of interest than can come within the limits of a necessarily sketchy paper. However, attention may be drawn to the sturdy, typical pillars, with their plain-cushioned capitals, unrelieved by any of the elaboration and embellishment which marks Norman work of a later period; to the beautiful little apse, over which, till of late, a fringe factory was kept in full and audible working order; to the internal work of what was, or what was intended to have been, the characteristic Norman central tower—in the arches of which the transition from Norman to Pointed is remarkable, two of them being in the former and two in the latter style; to the quadruple triforium arches; and, amongst relics of a later age, to Prior Bolton's window, bearing his rebus of a bolt fixed in a tun, which projects into the church, to the Mildmay tomb, and to the font whereat Hogarth was baptized.

The long-standing drawbacks to the completeness of this relic of old London, the infant school and the blacksmith's forge, which have been permitted by the vandalic indifference of years to occupy actually part of the triforium of the church, still exist; but in September, we hear, their leases expire, and it is sincerely to be hoped that the recent appeals by the Church authorities to the reverential sentiment of all who love their grand old city will result in the acquisition of the space thus put to such incongruous uses.

We search in vain amongst the alleys and back slums of Cloth Fair and Bartholomew Close—the last remnant of the old priory close, and long famous for its mulberry trees—for some trace of cloister or gate.

The result is not to be wondered at when we remember that the soil of London has been raised at least twelve feet since the Great Fire. An exploration of Cloth Fair cellars might reveal something, but our experience of Cloth Fair above ground inclines us to leave subterranean Cloth Fair unmolested.

From Saint Bartholomew's we strike away straight for the Temple.

Of the ancient Bernardine house here only the church remains, the remainder of the buildings having been destroyed by

Wat Tyler; whilst the church itself escaped the Great Fire by the merest shave, the flames, it is said, actually licking its east end.

The purely Norman portion of the church consists of the famous round "vestibule," with its beautiful entrance gate, although the nave is of but forty years later date.

But even here we see the struggle between Norman and Pointed or Early English, for, although the triforium arches are Norman, the pillars which support the pointed arches beneath are Early English. Their capitals, however, are Norman. The entrance above alluded to, the only enriched Norman arch in London, dates from the reign of Henry the Second.

As we mount the spiral staircase which leads us to the triforium, we may note the narrow penitential cell contrived in the thickness of the massive walls, wherein—amongst other victims—Walter de Bachelier, Grand Preceptor of Ireland, died in his fetters. The triforium itself has been consecrated to tablets and memorials of more or less famous Templars.

The recumbent figures under the vestibule originally lined the adjoining nave, and have been most carefully restored and identified. The beautiful Pointed nave has been described as the most exquisite specimen of that style in existence, and is actually, as a monument of old monastic London, of greater interest than the famous circular vestibule, which is so spick and span that a stranger, not knowing its history, might almost be pardoned for doubting its antiquity.

Of the two great Norman houses in Clerkenwell, that of the Hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem—which, as we have said, was a rival establishment to that at the Temple—and the Black Benedictine Nunnery, nothing remains above ground.

The crypt, however, of Saint John's Church is one of the finest in London, and is a good specimen of ecclesiastical architecture at that period when the struggle was going on between the Norman and Early English styles. Probably, almost certainly, it was, like the crypt of Bow Church, above ground, and, until thirty years ago, was used as a burial place. This is all that remains of the old priory.

Making our way to the busy Aldgate High Street, it is hard to realise that here, in Norman days, stood what was, perhaps, the most splendid and powerful religious house in London. The priory was founded by

Matilda, the wife of Henry the First, for the Canons Regular—the same fraternity which held Saint Bartholomew's, Smithfield, Saint Mary's Spittle, and Saint Mary's, Southwark. At the end of Cree (Christ's) Church Lane, we believe a relic of the old house was visible before the modern warehouses were erected, and an arch at the back of a shop in Leadenhall Street is said to have belonged to it; but certainly nothing else remains above ground. Of the hardly less famous Black Benedictine Nunnery, a solitary memory is perpetuated in the name of the Three Nuns public-house, near the Aldgate Metropolitan station; but there are many old houses scattered about here which must date from a period long anterior to the Great Fire, and which may have seen the last days of the famous religious establishments close by.

Crossing the river, we enter Southwark—most untempting, but most interesting of London "faubourgs."

Previous to the fire which raged here in 1676, and which completely altered the face of the neighbourhood, some remains were yet extant of the famous Priory of Saint Mary's, the church of which, after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539, was united with that of Saint Mary Overies, under the title of Saint Saviour's. The beautiful lady chapel of the present church is said to have belonged to the old priory; but the only Norman remains in it are the oaken effigy of one of the Norman founders of the priory, and a Norman arch in the wall of the north aisle.

Crossing the road and proceeding down the Bermondsey Street, we arrive at the church of Saint Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey. This church, a sufficiently interesting building, dating some two hundred years back, stands on the site of the chapel of the once-famous Abbey of Bermondsey, which was a Cluniac foundation. Before the graveyard was converted into a recreation ground, the walls on one side of it were those of the original abbey; but those which exist are palpably more modern.

We explore Grange Walk in the hope of lighting upon some remains of the old abbey gateway, which existed there not many years back, but with no result; and similar disappointment awaits us in our peregrination down Long Walk, where, in Bear Yard, we are told another relic exists. Bermondsey Square marks the site of the old abbey

close, and a street name or two suggest monastic derivations; but all else is prosaic nineteenth century squalor, filth, and poverty.

Despairing, therefore, of ferreting out any further relics of the old Norman religious houses of London, we retrace our steps across the river, and commence a search for "sundries."

First and foremost amongst these sundries is the Norman keep of the Tower of London, better known as the White Tower. Built upon the foundations of Cæsar's "Arx Palatina," externally it presents to us to-day much the same appearance that it presented to the old Londoners, who saw that the hand of the Norman in the land tarried not in securing conquest, and who marvelled that its architect, Gundulph, who built also on the same plan the still-surviving keep of Rochester, should, beneath the garb of a man of peace, display such ability for matters military.

Here were concentrated chapel, palace, council-chamber, hall, and prison; but all that has come down to us in unadulterated Norman form is the chapel, dedicated to Saint John, and, previous to the recent restorations, used as the Record Office.

The shape of the chapel, with its semi-circular apse, reminds us of Saint Bartholomew's, Smithfield; but the character is far plainer and simpler, and, therefore, more typical of the pure early Norman style.

Groping amongst the prisons in the basement of the Tower, we may note several specimens of that bold Norman vaulted roof which gradually, from one reason or another—perhaps the inability of the native artificers to carry out the designs of their foreign architect-masters—gave way to the flat wooden roofing which is so notable a characteristic of later Norman work in our great cathedrals.

Externally, as we have said, the White Tower retains its Norman character; but the requirements, civil and military, of succeeding ages, have, with the exception of Saint John's Chapel, gradually ousted all Norman work from the interior. The chapel is still used for divine service when the orthodox Tower Church of Saint Peter ad Vincula is not available; but we should mention that it is not included amongst the public sights, and that in order to see it a special order, giving access to the "reserved sights," must be procured.

Hard by is the ancient church of All Hallows, Barking, in which, as the edifice escaped the Great Fire and is of distinctly

Norman foundation, we expect to find some work of that period. All that is visible, however, are four or five Norman pillars supporting pointed arches. The brasses in this church are amongst the finest in London and are carefully preserved; but we learn with regret that the old time-stained oaken pews are shortly to be swept away in favour of the modern third-class railway carriage arrangement.

From here we go to Saint Peter's, Cornhill. Here, again, from the record on a tablet that the present church stands on the site of the first Christian church in Britain, we seemed to have a right to expect Norman work. As there is nothing, however, above ground, we enquire of a very superior lady pew-opener, if there is a crypt. As if resenting an enquiry, the answer of which does not come within the pale of her paid-for duties, she replies that there may be, but that she really doesn't know, and very evidently does not care. However, a humble old pensioner who has come to receive his "dole," rescues us by saying that although there is no basement to the church, he "minds" the time when there was a subterranean passage connecting the church with that of Great Saint Helen's, but that it has been long blocked up.

The ancient Benedictine Nunnery in Great Saint Helen's was founded in 1212—an epoch when the Norman style of building had not entirely given place to the Pointed; but no remains of the conventual buildings exist, the last having been pulled down at the end of the last century, to make way for the present Saint Helen's Place. Part of the old nunnery basement, however, still remains under Leathersellers' Hall, and in the north-east corner of the present most interesting church, the "City Westminster Abbey," as it has been called, against the blank wall are the seats formerly used by the nuns.

At Austin Friars, of which the old Priory Church is still used as a place of worship by the Dutch community of London, we do not expect to come across any relic of the Norman era, as the house was only established in 1253; but a little prying about in the old cellars of the neighbourhood will afford some evidence of the upward growth of the level of London soil. Especially in some cellars in Old Broad Street may be noted a range of arches which once formed part of the Augustinian cloisters, and, when the present Stock Exchange was built, the continuation of them was discovered in Throgmorton

Street. No doubt the "Old Priory" Wine Vaults in Change Alley formed part of the same premises.

The Church of Saint Mary, Woolnoth, at the junction of Lombard and King William Streets, stands upon ground associated with worship for so many centuries—the remains of a Roman Temple to Ceres having been found beneath the foundations—that we enter it on our way westward.

The vergeress—intelligent, be it noted—tells us that there is a crypt, but that it is entirely filled with coffins, and has long been shut up; a fact which reminds us of the outcry raised some years back about the contamination of the waters of the adjoining pump by the accumulation of bodies under the said church—an outcry which was silenced by proof that the contamination arose from quite different causes.

Some framed legal documents on the walls are said to date from the twelfth century, but as they are written in English, we take the liberty of suggesting the fourteenth for the twelfth.

Hence we go to Bow Church, and here we find a double "bonne bouche" in the shape of an intelligent verger, and a splendid Norman "crypt." Crypt it is now, inasmuch as it is fourteen feet beneath the level of Cheapside; but, from the abrupt cutting short of the arches by the ceiling, it is evident that this gloomy region was the actual Norman Church of Saint Mary le Bow. The pillars which remain, each of pure Norman, form a semicircle, so that we may conclude this to have been the apse of the old church. All is perfect darkness here, so that a lantern is necessary for purposes of inspection; and our cicerone tells us that up to so recent a date as 1862, the coffins were so accumulated here, that there was only a narrow tortuous path between them available for visitors.

We may add that when Wren restored the church after the Great Fire, he discovered under this crypt a Roman causeway, which probably came from the quay on Thames side.

Another instance of the upheaval of London soil may be found not far away in Lawrence Pountney Lane off Cannon Street. Here, close to where stood the old Merchant Taylors' School, is to be seen a carpenter's shop, some twelve feet below the level of the lane, of which the roofing is well-preserved Gothic vaulting in stone.

This was a room of the old Palace of the Dukes of Suffolk; and later, of that Duke of Buckingham who is associated with the "Off with his head!" speech of King Richard the Third, although the speech was never made. Of Baynard's Castle, Mount Royal, and Mount Fichet, the other great Norman fortresses of London, no remains are extant, so that we may finally quit the City, and turn our steps towards Westminster.

Westminster Hall is generally cited as a relic of Norman London, and undoubtedly the bare walls are the work of William Rufus; but the complete restoration effected by Richard the Second, so utterly effaced all characteristic Norman work, that this magnificent relic is essentially a fourteenth century structure. The recent demolitions, however, of the Law Courts, upon their transfer to the new building in the Strand, brought to light, to the joy of antiquaries, the splendid Norman buttresses of the first founder.

In the Abbey itself there is nothing Norman; but in the Chapel of the Pyx we have what is even more interesting, a specimen of the so-called Saxon style, which was but a ruder branch of the same stock; and, did we not know that it was built by Edward the Confessor, might pardonably be classed as Norman work.

Half a century back Londoners might have seen a fine specimen of Norman work in Saint Stephen's Chapel, long the meeting-place of the national parliament; but, having been destroyed to make way for the new Houses of Parliament, nothing but the name which it has given to the entire group of buildings now remains.

A few instructive notes may appropriately close a necessarily short sketch of what is left to us of Norman London.

In the first place, it may appear astonishing that, when we know how plentifully the Normans built, so few remains should have come down to us—or rather, that we should see so little of them. There is a twofold answer to this. First, that the ancestor of many a church which traces its origin to the Norman period, was merely a wooden structure. Second, that bearing in mind the general raising of the level of London soil after the Great Fire, a fact alluded to by us in this paper more than once, Norman London remains hidden away in cellars and basements; and no one but an explorer knows the difficulties in the way of visiting London cellars and basements.

In the second place, it should be remembered that, when we ecstasically expatiate upon the grand, solid, characteristic effects of the interiors of fine Norman edifices, we are unconsciously lauding the present at the expense of the past. The Norman congregations and religious fraternities never saw those massive pillars and those bold arches in all the glory of their stone colouring, for Norman architects invariably plastered the whole, and covered the white ground-work with frescoes—typical remnants of which were found in Saint Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, and may yet be seen in many a country church. Hence, the churchwardens, whom we stigmatise as Goths for whitewashing the stonework of an ancient church, are in reality taking a nearer step towards restoring the building to its ancient appearance than are we, who scrape every bit of plaster and wash off in order to display the natural masonry.

In the third place, we cannot, with too much emphasis, warn the explorer, who would learn anything about London churches, against placing confidence in what is told him by those whom he fondly imagines, from their long residence in the neighbourhood, to be best qualified to make his visit instructive and interesting. The average London city-dweller moves much too actively in the world of the present to be able to give time and attention to matters associated with the past, and is far more interested in the last prominent police case than in the features of a remarkable building, situated almost at his very door, and which attracts curious pilgrims from all parts of the globe.

There was not a dweller in Cock Lane who could point out to us the original "Ghost House." There was no one about Smithfield who knew even of the existence of such a church as Saint Bartholomew the Less; we were flatly contradicted when we stated that it did exist, and only discovered it by peeping at hap-hazard through the hospital gates. Vergers and pew-openers are, as a rule, quite as ignorant; it being a strange fact that, the longer their service in the church, the more profound appears to be their ignorance.

Lastly, the difficulty of obtaining access to many of the most interesting London churches, at other hours than those of divine service, is very great. In some instances the vergers live many streets away; in one case, that of the Dutch

church in Austin Friars, the man's address was given, but it was very long before we could discover his home in the attics.

The practice, however, of throwing the City churches open at certain hours every day for service is becoming general, and it is then that the verger must be seized upon and arranged with, for of necessity no inspection of a church can take place during service time. In support of what we complain of, we invite any one to get into Saint Olave's, Hart Street, or All Hallow's, Barking, or Great Saint Helen's, or Bow Church, on the strength of any information he may derive from a perusal of the parochial notice-boards, which apparently serve the purpose of merely making militia, vaccination, and sermon announcements. All unusual requests, of course, such as ascent to a tower or triforium, or descent into a crypt, must be paid for. *Verbum sap.*

THE BOULEVARDE DIPLOMATIQUE.

THE Turkish city, in which I have the honour to be Deputy-Assistant-Vice-Consul-General, is gradually rousing itself up from its afternoon's doza. The trees and wide-eaved houses are beginning to throw long shadows, and in another hour it will be "Aksham." It has been a blazing hot day, and almost unendurable indoors, even with all the blinds drawn down on the sunny side of the house, and with all the windows open; but now the faint rustling of the leaves outside tells us that a little breeze has come to cool us, and that the hour for the evening promenade has arrived.

My chief and I descend into the garden, which now looks sadly sun-baked, and feels like an oven, with every breath of wind shut out by the twelve or fourteen feet of cobble walls by which it is surrounded. In the shade outside the Kavaskhana Simon, the head Kavas, squats on the ground with his eyes half shut, sleepily blowing long streams of blue cigarette-smoke through his hooked nose. He rouses himself sufficiently to half rise to his feet as we come down, but the moment our backs are turned relapses into his former attitude. In strong contrast to him is old Marco, who combines the functions of second Kavas and gardener, and who is now hosing away at the hard soil with no protec-

tion for his head against the sun but a little white felt skull-cap. Old Marco is a character in his way, and his appearance is peculiar. The only Christians of Scodra who are allowed to wear the "fustanelle," or full white petticoat of the Mohammedan Albanians, are the Kavasses of the Consulates; and Marco, who is himself short, has, probably from motives of economy, furnished himself with one of the very shortest of "fustanelles," so that he looks like an elderly ballet-dancer in the scantiest of skirts. But for him this garment represents all that is gorgeous in the matter of dress; and so, to protect it when he is gardening, or not on duty, he has manufactured out of some old sacks an enormous pair of loose trousers, into which he packs himself and his "fustanelle."

His chief drawback is that he speaks no language but his own, and is very dense in understanding what is meant by signs, so that it is very difficult to communicate with him at all. He is a devout and most superstitious Catholic, and literally starves himself all Lent, eating nothing but a little maize-bread, and drinking nothing but water; but, on the principle of making up for lost time, he gorges himself so piggyishly at the feast which is always given to the servants on Easter Day, that his much abused digestion revolts, and he appears on Monday morning a groaning and miserable object. His first petition then is for "Sale Inglese," or Epsom salts, which are considered a notable remedy by his compatriots; and in the evening he doses himself recklessly, only to reappear next morning as haggard and ghastly as a galvanised mummy. He groans and sighs over his work for a day or two, but such is the wonderful constitution of this leathery old man, that before the week is out he is as hearty and active as ever.

In the garden wall is a postern-gate, and, passing through this, we cross the one-plank bridge that spans the little stream surrounding the house and garden, and enter the public garden. There is always a large colony of ducks feeding by the stream in the late afternoon, and regularly every day our approach sends them quacking and waddling in every direction, giving occasion for some ill-conditioned joker to declare that one can always tell when the English are coming because of the "canards" which precede them. Jokes are rare with us, and the little European colony has subsisted on this one for more than a year.

The public garden is an invention of the Vali Pasha, who turned a waste bit of land, where all the old tin pots and general refuse of the quarter were thrown, into a pleasant garden with plenty of shrubs and flowers in the beds, and a kiosk in the centre.

Beyond the public garden runs a road, up and down which the Consuls and Vice-Consuls, and all the aristocracy of the European colony promenade every day before sunset, and for this reason it is known as the "Boulevard Diplomatique," or "Village Green"—a witticism which had a great success before the "canard" joke was invented.

The Greek Consul's little house looks out upon this road, and even more than the Athenians of old are the modern Greeks ever on the watch for the chance of seeing or hearing some new thing; so, at whatever hour I go into the public garden, I may be sure of catching a glimpse of my Greek friend, half hidden behind the window curtain, peeping up and down the road to see who is coming or going, and no doubt gathering plenty of material for those voluminous despatches which he writes every week, in spidery Greek characters, and reads over to himself with such evident satisfaction and so many chuckles.

Our appearance on the Boulevard Diplomatique is instantly perceived by him, and he quits his window to join us. He is a tall, thin, sallow-faced man, with the beard and walk of a conceited goat, and is carefully dressed for the afternoon promenade in a long, black frock-coat, tightly buttoned up, and with a pair of kneed trousers falling awkwardly over his broad flat shoes. Round his throat he wears a little black bow, and on his head a billy-cock hat, very high in the crown and narrow in the brim.

He flatters himself that he is a brilliant French scholar; but, as he has never been in Europe, his French savours very much of back numbers of the "Revue des Deux Mondes." From this periodical he has copied a paper full of long-winded phrases, which he always carries about in his pocket to be learned for future use in conversation, when there is no one to talk to, and it is too dark to look out of the window.

His two topics of conversation are himself and "mon pays," and his ignorance on European, and especially on English matters, is of the blandly self-satisfied and

not-to-be-convinced order; but perhaps for this very reason he is a most entertaining companion, and our constant associate in our evening stroll. He is capital fun, for so sublime is his self-consciousness that he always imagines every one to be looking at or talking of him, and gets into agonies if he hears people laugh without knowing what it is they are amused at. Life would be distinctly duller here without him.

In a few minutes we are joined by the French chancellor, with his "képi" on his head, his eternal cigarette in his mouth, and his celebrated dog, Fox, by his side. Last autumn Fox was given up for dead, for a snake bit her on the lip when we were out shooting on the plain. We had some of the natives with us, and, after they had killed the snake, they looked about for a certain plant without success for some time; and, when they did find it, poor Fox was stretched out stiff and lifeless. The Albanians said it was too late; but one of them, as he had found the leaf, thought he might as well use it, so, chewing a little, he placed it on the wound and down Fox's throat. We then placed the poor dog under a hedge and covered her with a branch of the wait-a-bit thorn. That was on November the twentieth; on the twenty-fourth Fox turned up alive, but very weak and thin, at her master's door. Strangely enough, the remedy had not been applied too late, and the dog recovered to become a celebrity.

Her master is a capital fellow, and a sportsman, but rather too careless to be a pleasant companion after the birds. If I go first through a gap he scrambles after me with his gun at full cock, held loosely under his arm; if I make him go first he trails the muzzle of his gun behind him, so that I am constantly in expectation of going home in the game-bag.

We were out after quail one day, and a bird got up just as we were approaching a road along which a peasant was going to the bazaar with his wife riding astride of an old horse. The little Frenchman was too excited to hold his fire, and the report of his gun was followed by a loud yell, and the thud of a heavy body falling to the ground. The peasant pointed his rifle threateningly at us, and we rushed forward full of apprehension, for it is a serious matter to put shot into an Albanian; but happily we soon saw that no harm was done; the old horse, being peppered behind with small shot, had flung up its heels and sent its rider on her back in the mud.

The mountaineer burst into roars of unfeeling laughter at seeing his wife plastered with mud, and she rained down maledictions upon the horse, her husband, and ourselves; but a few piastres soon set everything right, and we continued our sport, thankful that we had not to run for our lives before an infuriated tribe of mountaineers.

Our friend's chief is not to be seen to-day; he retired into private life nearly a week since, on the occasion of his yearly baths. For more than a month there has not been a cloud in the sky, the earth is parched and cracking, and life is only rendered tolerable to an Englishman by the plentiful use of a cold tub; but a Frenchman does not consider that the bath should be entered lightly or without proper precautions. In happier climes, he would, no doubt, make his annual visit to some fashionable sea-side bathing-place, and there disport himself on the beach in a tight and many-hued garment, once a day stalking down a plank-path across the shingle, slowly and with conscious pride, towards the sea, till he was immersed as far above the knee as the authorities would permit, and then he would splash himself discreetly and with caution, or, perhaps, join hands and bob round in a circle with ladies and gentlemen similarly attired; but here there is no "plage," and no "costume de bain," nothing but a tin bath and solitude.

We lose his society for ten days, and he takes six baths. On his retirement from the world he takes medicine, and devotes the first two days to preparing himself for the ceremony. Then for six consecutive days he takes a bath, the water being slightly warmed that he may catch no chill, and then he remains indoors for two more days that his system may have time to recover from the shock before he exposes himself to the chance of catching cold under an August sun. The ten days past, he reappears among us washed and rejuvenated, and so marvellous in his economy, that, on those half-dozen baths, he manages to look perfectly clean all the year round.

Presently we meet the Italian, a lively little man, and then the Austrians and the Russian; but we have only time to exchange greetings with them, for it is getting late, and the Muezzin, mounting the little wooden minaret of the Mosque opposite, proclaims the hour of prayer in a high-pitched nasal voice. It soon gets dark when once the

sun has set, and so with due deliberation, the lamplighter begins to light the petroleum lamps which the Vali Pasha has placed round the public garden and along the street near it.

This functionary is a tall and gaunt old Mussulman, with a fierce moustache, an embroidered scarlet jacket, and a huge "fustanelle." He carries a ladder, a box of lucifer-matches, and a huge green cotton umbrella. He plants his ladder against the wooden post on the top of which a common tin lamp is insecurely fastened, and taking off the glass chimney, opens his umbrella to keep off the wind. The handle of the umbrella is tucked under his arm, and then balancing himself on the rickety ladder, he proceeds to strike a light with his lucifers, carefully protecting the sputtering flame with both his hands.

Naturally this is a slow process, and by the time the dozen lamps are lighted everybody is safe at home, for the citizens do not go out at night, but retire to rest at a very early hour. The appearance of the lamplighter warns us that dinner must be ready, and that the public garden gates will soon be shut; so, wishing our friends "good night," we retire through the little gate in the wall, and mount the stone stairs which lead to the living rooms in the old Albanian house. My own little house is in a street a couple of hundred yards off, so I do not delay long, but set off through the darkening and rapidly-emptying streets to my own home, where the faithful Achmet, and Simon, the cook, are busily preparing the evening meal.

LONDON EXHIBITIONS.

WE must have our exhibitions. London and the great provincial cities are agreed upon that point. And not only those exhibitions of art and industry which are always with us, but also those bright and pleasing general shows which include gay gardens and fountains, music, and myriads of lamps glowing nightly among lawns and groves. We must have, also, an element of serious interest to justify us in taking our pleasure. It is the pursuit of knowledge that brings people from country-houses and parsonages, from villa, farm, and shop, to visit the exhibition of the period. If they are ultimately found whirling down tobogganing slides, or cruising over the undulations of the switchback railway, they may be supposed

to be unbending their minds after exhaustive studies of industrial products or mechanical inventions.

So far, we have had nothing brighter or more pleasant than the Italian Exhibition at West Kensington, with its "chic" and pretty local colouring; and, coming as a surprise, those very charming galleries where one may wander about steeped in impressions of that lovely and famous land. Then we have the Anglo-Danish—more Anglo than Danish, perhaps, but engineered for such an excellent purpose, and withal so pretty in itself. The fairy scene of "The Fisheries," which was never surpassed in the way of glamour and enchantment by the more elaborate electric lighting of the later exhibitions—all this renewed and even improved upon, as far as the garden-fête is concerned. Ireland, too, claims a share of public attention. The fine hall close to Addison Road Station, known as Olympia, will be open all the summer; and, while the interior of the building will be filled with exhibits of Ireland's natural products, of her industries, and of those antiquities in which her soil is so rich, we are to have an Irish Village, a Round Tower, a Blarney Castle, and something like a horse-fair—anyhow, a jumping or steeplechasing exhibition, which will gratify all those sporting tendencies which, latent or evident, form part of nearly everybody's personal baggage.

Now, if we add to these the faithful friends of each succeeding year, such as the Crystal Palace, with its evening fêtes, its fireworks, and illuminations among its charming grounds; our theatres all in full swing; our concert-halls, with their varied feasts of sweet sounds; with these and many other diversions, suited to all the various tastes, London is not likely to lose her prestige, whether in the eyes of country visitors or of her own peculiar children. And something in the air seems to say that the winter of our discontent has at last broken up; that hard times do not mean to come again any more—at all events, not yet awhile; that we may take our favourite diversions without being over-anxious about what the future may bring. In fact, we may respond to our favourite slogan, "Vogue la galère," without much dread of the future question, as to what business we had on board that favourite but somewhat perfidious craft.

And the mention of the galley—that time-honoured and useful friend of the

cribe—brings us at once to the Italian Exhibition. Very opportunely has the Italian Government sent over a number of models of naval architecture, both ancient and modern, and among them some capital models of the galleys of old times, with their fierce crews of slaves and criminals, and their double or four-fold banks of oars, such as Venice sent forth in the pride of her power, when she was Queen not only of the Adriatic, but of the Mediterranean. All these in contrast with the models of the giant ironclads of the period, which now enable united Italy to claim rank as one of the naval powers of the world.

But neither warlike material, nor harsh industrial products, are characteristic of the Italy of our imagination: a picture which the bright scene at West Kensington helps us to realise—a Roman market-place, a ruined street in Pompeii, distant Alpine summits—and all arranged with a taste and dexterity which is truly Italian. There are times when the illusion is tolerably complete, as when night gathers round with cerulean sky and shining stars, and the housetops form a sky-line, like ranges of purple hills against the golden glow; then, with the twang of the mandolin, and the strains of distant music in the air—with all this we may get something of the Italian feeling into our waking dreams.

But, if Italy is not exactly industrial, she is industrious enough in her way; and she has much to show in those mingled products of artistic work and manual dexterity—Roman mosaics, and those of Naples, Florentine jewelry, inlaid cabinets and furniture; revived arts—in the way of lace and of the once-famed Venetian glass—with coral-work, and gems, and amethysts, trinkets fine and rare, gold and silver filagree work, ornaments in lava, tortoise-shell, and mother-of-pearl;—all these things are pleasant to view, even if they occasionally excite feelings of cupidity and envy. Then lace holds an important position. The makers of Venice point out that they have never disappeared entirely from the scene, and the art and mastery thereof, now revived and extended, are still of importance in the old city of the lagoons.

After all, as is only fit and right, the great feature of our Italian Exhibition is its Italian art.

With twenty-two rooms devoted to the exhibition of works of art, and more than a thousand pictures hung upon their walls, there is plenty of work cut out for critics and cognoscenti. But for the general

uncritical public also the collection is full of interest.

Italian art—the modern art of Italy—is just now in a very interesting stage. It has shaken itself free from dreary ancestral traditions; it runs, in no wise, on the grand and classic lines of the Old Masters; it has escaped, too, from the gloomy shades of German influence, and now seems to be finding its way to a distinct expression of the national sentiment in art. The school is French, no doubt, but it is French with a difference; and the difference—which is of motive and sentiment rather than of process—is one which time will probably strengthen.

But, apart from its artistic meaning, the Italian collection is of general interest as giving us at one view such a vivid representation of the inner life of a land more talked about than understood; in all its modern aspects, with its setting of glowing skies and deep blue seas, with pathetic sunsets above the ruins of an older world, or sunrises as sad over the modern world of labour and suffering.

Here are peasants at work in the fields, and here again is the life of the city, scenes of the convent, and scenes—unconventional—of the studio, the conscript on the march, the fisherman in his boat; all the scenes, pathetic, trivial, grave or gay, the stimulating passion, the corroding care, the trifling pleasures, and sorrows too substantial, which form the business of the passing hour. And thus, in passing through these galleries, with only a hasty glance at the many pictures, we may carry away with us a real, if vague, impression of the land and its people, such as we might fail to attain by more arduous and conscientious studies.

It is not easy to admire the later development of sculpture and the plastic arts, as shown at the Italian Exhibition, where a spirit fantastic and grotesque has replaced the tranquil goddess of other times. But this is not an age in which high art in sculpture has much chance of recognition.

From Italy to Denmark is a far cry geographically, and the genius of the two peoples seems a long way apart. Our early impressions of the Danes—derived from historical text-books now no doubt superseded—were of a decidedly hostile character. Those Danes were always harrying and plundering; and they often got the best of such fights as were going at the period, in a way that injured the

susceptibilities of a sturdy patriot. But of late years we have heard nothing but good of them; and a visit to the Anglo-Danish Exhibition will only confirm this favourable impression. As already noticed, here is the old locale of the Fisheries and the Health Exhibition; and in the new presentation of the old scene, the character of Hamlet is by no means omitted. Indeed, in the pleasant garden fête of to-day, which continues the traditions of Ranelagh and Vauxhall, we are constantly reminded of Hamlet, and of his Danish extraction. Yonder is his tomb; there is the old tower of Kronsberg, where the ghost may have walked, and the players have been duly entertained. There is a Danish village, too, and a windmill; and Danish peasants at their daily employments. Then you have an art gallery adorned with works of the great Thorwaldsen, and hung with pictures by Danish artists; while the inimitable story-books of another great Dane, Hans Christian Andersen, are illustrated by tableaux vivants in their appropriate hall. And it is everybody's bounden duty to go and visit the Anglo-Danes, as it is carried on for the benefit of an excellent charity, the Hospital for Incurables; and, after the first visit, people will often revisit the charming evening fête for the sake of its own attractions.

Ireland comes next on our list, for Erin has fairly launched herself among metropolitan entertainers, and her green banner waves over the halls of Olympia. Now that all the fittings of the hippodrome are removed from that building, we see what a noble area it affords for such an exhibition. Gay with parti-coloured flags is the roof of wondrous span; the floor is covered with avenues of gaily-decorated stalls and stands, and with the swell of a fine organ or the ringing notes of a military band—Irish, of course, also, belonging to the Connaught Rangers, or, perhaps, to the Tipperary Blazers, or some other regiment of decided nationality—Erin may consider her business fairly launched.

And, considering the matter, we shall find how many products Ireland affords which are peculiar to herself, or which she furnishes in the greatest perfection. Dublin stout hardly lends itself to histrionic display; but a great trophy of barrels, loaded on their own special trucks, with their own special engine to draw them, serves as a reminder of what we owe to Ireland in that way. And how charmingly mellow the whisky looks in the innumerable

bottles and glass vessels which exhibit its perfections! Then, where shall we get anything to beat real Irish linen, for all qualities of texture, beauty, and utility? And here we have the looms at work developing those beautiful damasks which are sought by Kings and Queens for table napery, and which are worthy of their high estate; while, for the linen of ordinary wear, here are other less elaborate looms, some of even primitive construction, and, with them, spinning wheels of all kinds which still are sometimes to be found away among the "spinsters and knitters in the sun."

There is the ulster, too, the majestic ulster, for in its real Irish form this is, indeed, a majestic garment; and when you come to Irish frieze, where can you find anything to stand the weather like it, if you yourself have the strength to stand under its massive texture? And bog oak, too—surely you are at home among the bog-oak stalls, and Grafton Street, Dublin, seems not far away. And Irish lace, too, is not easy to beat, nor are those magnificent embroideries contributed by the Irish School of "Art Needlework." The old Irish elk, too, in skeleton form, towers over the scene.

There are bells, too—Irish bells—excellent in form and sonorous in tone, successors of the sacred bells of old, which may be heard even now of still nights from the bottom of loch or river pool; and crosses, too, memorial crosses of the old Irish form in the old Irish granite.

And, if it comes to that, where can you match the Irish horse for his pluck, his mettle, his endurance? For the Irish horse is to be one of the features of the exhibition. Some have arrived, and others are on their way at the present time of writing.

But the cows are here in force—the real Irish cows, with a real Celtic motion about those supple hind legs of theirs. Not merely a sample for tasting, but whole rows of the comely beasts, as if a great dairy business were intended by-and-by.

And then there is to be found a bit of old Ireland in the adjoining ground, which is approached by a tunnel which might be a cave among the rocks of Killarney, with crags and ferns growing out of the crevices, and opening out upon the view a land of marvel and mystery, where a strong feudal castle, battlemented and loopholed, has arisen in a night—a fortnight, anyhow; and where the square tower of Blarney Castle

—the original Blarney stone could not be spared for the occasion—looks down upon a village of Donegal, and what we may imagine to be Punchestown racecourse; anyhow, there is the grand stand rising from its foundations, and a course where there is to be leaping and jumping by real Irish hunters.

Nor will the pig be forgotten; anyhow, there are the styes getting ready for the peasant's friend.

And when the peasants are comfortably settled in their cottages, and the sports are "forward," we may hope for a sight of real Irish brogues dancing a real Irish jig.

RED TOWERS.

By ELEANOR C. PRICE.

Author of "Gerald," "Alexia," etc., etc.

PART II.

CHAPTER IX. OLD FRIENDS.

It was not till Paul Romaine found himself back at Red Towers that things began to take their right proportions in his mind, with the discovery that, after all, there was a good deal worth living for in life still. Sometimes duty, like a passion, pulls a man with strong cords, so that he must follow her; and for the last few months, though Paul was hardly conscious of it, she had been pulling him home to Red Towers.

He was no longer the absent young Squire who, five years ago, had wandered through his woods, lost in dreams of music and poetry, and the first love which had spoilt the best years of his youth for him. Even now he was only twenty-eight; but in mind he was a good deal older; and so Mr. Bailey, the agent, found, when with some little amusement and curiosity he obeyed Paul's summons to go over the estate with him. All sorts of reforms were instantly set on foot; money was spent in all directions, on cottages, farms, land, parish improvements, all with a singular leaning to the interest of the tenants, rather than of the landlord.

Mr. Bailey told every one that Red Towers would be a model estate very soon; he himself especially marvelled at Paul's keen observation, and at all the suggestions that came from him. The neighbours, who were rather more numerous than they used to be, did not even now find Paul very sociable; the Vicar and Dr. Graves seemed to be the only two people of whom he cared to see much, and he was rather tormented by a large artist family which

had taken Canon Percival's house for the summer. There were several girls, who prowled sketching about the woods, and whose art had not been to them much of an education; for they found the tall, dark Squire a most interesting person, and seemed to have a keen instinct for the picturesque places through which his daily walks might lead him.

Paul was too chivalrous not to behave kindly and civilly to his tenants. He fled from these young people, it is true, on every occasion, but he sent their mother great baskets of roses, and he went to see her sometimes when the girls were out. She was a quiet woman with some good sense of her own, dwelling far below the artistic heights of her family.

It was of course practically impossible for Paul to see nothing of people who lived a few hundred yards from his own door; and after one of the girls, who was musical, had discovered his great talent for music, his isolation began to be more impossible still. Dr. Graves and Mr. Bailey agreed that Paul's escape would be a miracle, and all the old servants, Sabin and his wife, Ford, Barty, Mrs. Perks—Barty had now married the housemaid at Red Towers, and lived in Colonel Ward's old cottage to take care of it—grew more angry and anxious every day. To think that the master, who was to have married a beautiful, grand young lady like Miss Darrell, should take up with one of these little painting upstarts! It was felt as a disgrace that such a thing should be even talked of in the village. And, in the meantime, Paul went unconsciously on his way. He did not want to hear Miss Sibyl Cox play the organ, and he was rather bored and vexed when Miss Phyllis Cox presented him with a sketch she had made of Red Towers. He stuck it up on the bookcase in the study, however, and spoke sharply to Sabin when it disappeared and was found hidden under a pile of newspapers.

"He wants somebody to look after him, does that young man," remarked Mrs. Sabin, who had been guilty of hiding the sketch. "There ain't even the Colonel now. He's just as simple and innocent as when he was a boy, and he'll fall a prey to some of them designing things, see if he don't."

The Sabins were still more alarmed one day, when Paul came in with Mr. Cox, the father; it was the first time that any of the family had been inside Red Towers. Paul took Mr. Cox all over the house,

through the bare, unfinished rooms; strangely fresh they looked, these rooms unused for nearly five years, the walls dressed in Celia's favourite colours; but Mrs. Sabin had taken good care of them. Mr. Cox had done a good deal in the way of decorating houses; and now it had occurred to Paul that his old house ought not to be left in its present state any longer, and he wanted Mr. Cox's advice as to setting to work upon it. Mr. Cox suggested a few things rather modestly; and then, quite in innocence, for he was an honest little man, devoted to his art, he said that his daughters, Phyllis and Emily, had made a study of the subject, and that a good many houses in London had been decorated after their ideas.

"It is a pleasure to see them among draperies," said Mr. Cox. "Phyllis can hang a curtain in a hundred different ways, I believe; her folds are delicious. Emily's strong point is a corner; she can do anything with a corner. A recess, too; you have so many recesses here. Yes, these old rooms are suggestive to the last degree."

"And the colour, the foundation is all right, is it?" said Paul.

"It is utterly satisfying," Mr. Cox replied.

"Thank you," said Paul.

He said no more; the jargon repelled him now, as it had repelled him before, though from the lips of Celia. But he walked with the artist along the common to his house, in the glowing beauty of the summer evening. Somebody hurried out of the wood, not in time to overtake them; it was Phyllis—she had been sketching in that corner, loved by artists, where Celia had sat and read Vincent Percival's letter, one October day long ago. Phyllis was not pursued into the wood by the Squire: no such luck for her; she saw him leave her father at the gate, and walk on himself down the lane towards the village, where there was no chance of catching him. The next best thing was to hurry home and hear what he and her father had been talking about.

Paul went marching on at a great pace down the sandy lane. It was the middle of August, a beautiful time for this country of his. The heather, in its fullest bloom, lay like a purple carpet on the commons and hills; harvest was going on slowly in the fields among the dark rich woods.

The tenderness and beauty of the evening, the white church spire in the foreground of that view, as Paul walked down

to it, could not fail to have effect on a nature like his.

He was thinking of his old friends; he had been thinking of them all day, with a sort of loneliness, a longing to hear again some voice he used to love, which had, in fact, driven him to that consultation with Mr. Cox.

Paul's practical doings had still their little romantic inspirations, though Mr. Bailey—not, perhaps, Dr. Graves—would have been surprised to hear it. Paul was not thinking of Celia, not consciously at least; that meeting with her husband had removed even any lingering regret; he was beginning to know that he had outlived that passion of his boyish days. But he was feeling utterly friendless. His naturally affectionate nature was starving, in its native air, for some other human being to give it what it missed.

He was thinking of the dear old Colonel, how he and his dogs used to walk about the lanes, how he was in and out of Red Towers at all hours of the day, how he almost looked upon the place as his own. How angry he was when Paul talked of marrying, and then— The latter part of the story was too sad to be thought all over again; but Paul remembered, rather vaguely, that the Colonel had once vexed him by ordering a tree to be cut down. If he were here now—dear old man!—he might cut down every tree in the wood.

Then all these thoughts of Colonel Ward led on to the thought of Mrs. Percival, Colonel Ward's ideal all through his simple, faithful life; her soft brown eyes, her pretty white hands, the sweet smile and manner which attracted so many people.

She had always been very kind to Paul when he was a boy; she had been more like his mother than any one else. He did not quite know, now, what she had done that could not be forgiven; probably Celia had deceived her too.

For some weeks past Paul had been a little self-reproachful as regarded Mrs. Percival. Very soon after he came home, having heard of it by some chance, she had written him one of her pretty notes, asking him to come and see them at Woolborough. Paul, still cased in the cold crust of a hardened traveller, and full of his new resolve to devote himself sternly to his tenants, and to live like a hermit in England, with occasional visits to the East, had sent a short and snubbing answer to this invitation:

He had told himself clearly that he had better have nothing more to do with that family, and he meant to carry out this intention. But, somehow, several times, things at Holm which reminded him of Colonel Ward reminded him of Mrs. Percival too. He was never able to help thinking of her, for instance, when he stood by the Colonel's grave in the little, still churchyard, with its old yew-trees, one of which, about sunset, threw a shadow on the grave.

The Colonel himself had always been faithful to his old loves and friendships. How would it have been, Paul sometimes wondered, if he had lived a few weeks longer—lived to know of Celia's falseness? He used to say that he never changed his mind about anybody. Well, even in that case, he would not have changed his mind about Mrs. Percival, and why should he?

Paul paid a shorter visit than usual that evening to his old friend's grave, and he did not go on into the church, as he had done two or three times lately, to bring back old memories in solemn music—music which had once brought Miss Sibyl Cox peeping in at the church door—but he turned off, and walked back at a great pace to Red Towers to catch the post, by which he sent a few lines to Mrs. Percival:

"If you and Canon Percival would not dislike it, and are quite alone, I should be glad to spend a couple of days with you."

In answer to this, Mrs. Percival sent him a more affectionate welcome than he felt he deserved. He at once decided to go to Woolsborough the next day, taking with him a large box of curiosities which he had brought from the East, and had never cared to unpack. It had seemed dull work, bringing all these pretty things home to an empty house, for no one but himself. Mrs. Percival would like them, he thought, and they would make a little amends for his ungraciousness.

He started off to Woolsborough, without a word of coming back in two days. Something told him that he would not do that; a strange, young feeling had come over him with Mrs. Percival's letter; in going to Woolsborough, he was once more a schoolboy going home.

Mrs. Percival received him more than kindly—tenderly. A slight nervousness, perhaps, made her more demonstrative than usual; but Paul found no fault with the affection she showed him. The Canon, too, looking graver and older, said heartily how glad he was to see him again. And

the strangest thing was, that the old, original, homely feeling of the house had come back to it; the peace and freedom which used to be there before Celia came, when Paul was a schoolboy. He had half feared to find the place haunted by Celia; but, perhaps, it is only real people with real feelings, not counterfeits, who have the power of leaving a strong impression of themselves behind. Paul found that he could live in the rooms at River Gate, could walk about the garden, row on the river, wander in and out of the Cathedral, linger among the quaint old shops in the streets of the city, without meeting Celia's ghost everywhere, unless he chose to call it up for himself.

At first Mrs. Percival did not mention her name, or go back to the past at all; and it was silently that Paul, looking about him in the drawing-room, saw Colonel Ward's beautiful old china and enamels arranged here and there. The room was so full of pretty things, that Paul's box from the East seemed hardly to be wanted; but when he unpacked it and carried the things in, china, pottery, brass and silver work, Turkish embroidery, and so on, Mrs. Percival's rather worn face reddened and lighted up with pleasure.

"You delightful boy!" she cried, coming into the midst of the Oriental confusion that Paul was spreading about the room. "Vincent did not bring me anything like this from India."

"By-the-bye," said Paul, looking up into her face as he laid a beautiful rug at her feet, "where is Vincent?"

"In France, with the Montmirails," said Mrs. Percival, her happy smile fading.

"Still!" said Paul.

"What do you mean, my dear?"

Paul straightened himself and answered: "Nothing; only I heard of his being there in May. I was at Tours, passing through, and met Monsieur de Montmirail."

"Did you really? How curious!"

"He told me Vincent was there then. He suggested my going down, too; but I did not quite see it. Vincent has been there all the summer, then."

"No; he was at home for about a month. Then Celia wrote to him from Trouville; they were there. I don't think she asked him to go exactly; but, anyhow, he went. And now I believe he has gone back with them into the country; but Vincent does not write often. I know he likes it very much. He enjoys the life; it amuses him, and he never did care for Woolsborough."

Paul said nothing.

"I think Achille de Montmirail is a good sort of man," Mrs. Percival went on after a moment.

"I always liked him," Paul said. "And he is not a bit changed. We knew each other at once, the other day, and he was very friendly."

"Rather stupidly so," Mrs. Percival thought, "if he asked you to go there. The friendliness is more to your credit than his, my dear Paul. Now, how I should like to know the true history of your and Celia's engagement!"

But this was a question she could not ask, and she took refuge in exclamations of delight over the Eastern treasures, thinking all the time what a goose Celia had been, what a handsome, manly, simple, generous fellow Paul was, and how happy any girl might have been with him. It was better for Paul, though; she confessed that to herself. Celia's character could never have been a good match for his, and her aunt suspected that it was not improving with years. Presently, in the midst of her admiration of Paul's spoils, she said:

"My dear boy, I can't let you waste all these lovely things on me. They must be for your house, for your wife. No; I really won't have them; they shall be packed up again. Just one or two of those brass things, if you like; their shapes are too distracting. It is most nice of you to have brought them all to me; but I can't be so selfish, Paul, really."

"I shall never marry," said Paul; "and they will be much better here than at Red Towers. I shall often see them here, if you will let me come."

"Never marry! Nonsense! Why not?" said Mrs. Percival.

"Because I have lost my faith in women—with a few exceptions," he said, smiling.

"You will find it again."

Paul shook his head. "In the days that followed, while he went in and out, enjoying himself in much the same fashion as when he was a boy, renewing his old friendship with Dr. Chanter, with the enthusiasm for music which had long been laid aside, and in the high air of the Cathedral regaining some of the old happy trustfulness which used to be his special charm in his young days; through this time Mrs. Percival, watching him closely and wondering at him not a little, found it almost impossible to allude to the painful histories of the past. She was sorry enough

now for any share which she had had in them, for any scheming into which she might have entered for Celia's sake. She might have been called a worldly woman; but she had a heart, and she meant to be true to her friends. Celia, she felt quite sure now, was both heartless and false; and that Vincent should be so strongly attracted by her now, that he should spend his whole time in attendance on the Marquise, whose "ménage" he had been so curious to see, filled his mother's mind with an anxiety she could not put into words, even to her husband. She knew Vincent's nature very well, and she felt, perhaps now doing a little injustice, that Celia was capable of anything.

One day, when Paul was sitting with her on the terrace after luncheon, and they had been talking of Colonel Ward, she said:

"It was a very great shame that he left Celia all that money. He told me he meant to do it, poor dear, before we left England that autumn; but I thought, and so did he, of course, that it was the same thing as leaving it to you."

Paul was silent for a few minutes, leaning back, staring away at the river and the distant hills.

"There are few things that I am more thankful for," he said.

"Paul," said Mrs. Percival, "you are sometimes beyond my understanding."

Paul turned and looked at her, with a little hardness in his smile.

"Don't pretend to think that I am speaking unselfishly," he said. "If that money had not been left to Celia, she would never— Now I am a brute," he said, colouring; "but I mean this, you know: that the whole arrangement was perfectly satisfactory to me."

"I never could make out——" murmured Mrs. Percival.

"Don't trouble yourself about it," said Paul. "I couldn't explain, so let us drop the subject, please."

Yes, Mrs. Percival felt that it must be dropped now and for ever; the secret of that misunderstanding between Paul and Celia must always be a secret to her. She felt a little awkward, and was glad that the footman came out at that moment with some letters. While Paul was gravely studying an eloquent one from Mr. Cox, she had opened the most interesting of her own, a foreign one, and was reading it with a frown of painful interest.

"Where is the Canon?" she exclaimed, starting up: and then she remembered that

he was gone out for the day. "Dear me! how am I to answer this?" she said.

"Whata strange thing! Shall I have to go?"

"Can I be of any use? Where are you going?" said Paul, standing up, and putting his own letter into his pocket.

"To bring the girl back! But what am I to do with the girl? Hasn't he relations of his own?" cried Mrs. Percival; and then she sat down again, and held the letter out to Paul. "I can't start off," she said. "I don't want to go there, and the Canon won't go, and I hate those long cross-country journeys alone. Besides—Tell me, Paul, what had I better do?"

"Am I to read this?" said Paul.

"Please; I want your advice," she said.

So Paul read the letter. It was from the Marquis de Montmirail, written in rather involved English; he was very fond both of talking and writing English. It was a pressing invitation to Canon and Mrs. Percival to go at once on a visit to La Tour Blanche. They knew it would be a still greater pleasure to Celia, if possible, than to him. If the Canon found himself too much engaged, would Mrs. Percival come alone? He went on to say that there was some question of a marriage for his daughter Antoinette. Nothing was finally settled yet, and he wished her first to pay a visit to his relations and friends in England. Would Mrs. Percival have the kindness to take charge of her on the journey? "Do not refuse me the favour of this visit, dear madame. Since I have lost my mother-in-law, the Vicomtesse de Ferrand, the charming lady you remember, I have not had any old friend to whom I could address myself as now to you. Pray return me a good answer to this request, which I should only make to a person in whom I had great confidence."

"He wants a safe escort for his daughter, and he wants to send her away to England; and his wife does not concern herself much in the matter. That is how I read his letter, poor thing," said Mrs. Percival.

"It does look rather like that," said Paul. "Wouldn't it be a good thing if you could go?"

"But the Canon won't—and really I'm afraid—and without a line from Celia—not even a message!"

"You need not be afraid," said Paul. "I could go with you—as far as Tours. I could see you off from Tours. Vincent is

there, and there cannot be much doubt that Celia will be glad to see you."

"Thank you, dear," said Mrs. Percival, gazing at him, and speaking rather absently. "As to being afraid, I did not quite mean the journey, perhaps—Timms and I are old travellers enough for that. But of course it will make all the difference if you will go with me—to Tours, I mean. But I must talk to the Canon. When can we start? Dear me, I must write some notes. You won't mind my going in, Paul; this is really rather overwhelming."

She went in at the window, smiling sweetly at the young man as she left him on the terrace, from which he soon disappeared, going down to the ferry and crossing the river for a walk in the fields beyond.

Mrs. Percival did not write notes, but sat down with Achilles's letter, and studied it till her head ached and her bright eyes were clouded: she felt sure that there was something wrong. He wanted to send his young daughter to England, out of the way of something. He wanted Celia's relations to see for themselves, perhaps—and yet Mrs. Percival felt that all this had sprung out of her own imagination. If there was anything odd in Achilles's writing himself, it could be easily explained. Celia was busy, or lazy, or amused; and he was a fidgety, anxious father; perhaps poor Antoinette was rebellious, and did not like the marriage suggested for her. After all, that was very likely. Achilles would be terribly puzzled what to do with an obstinate girl, whose stepmother probably wanted her married as soon as possible. Poor little Antoinette! No doubt she was at the bottom of it all.

Yet beyond this there was a fear, a shadow, which weighed Mrs. Percival's spirits down. There were two people, nearest to her in blood, in whom she felt she could trust nothing but their selfishness. And a mother can love her son in spite of this; but an aunt, to her niece, is not quite so indulgent.

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